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VAILIMA LETTERS

VAILIMA LETTERS

BEING CORRESPONDENCE

ADDRESSED BY

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

TO

SIDNEY COLVIN

NOVEMBER, 1890—OCTOBER, 1894

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

CHICAGO
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The Frontispiece is a portrait of R. L. Stevenson with the native chief Tuimalealiifano.

XIX

Sunday, 29th May.

1892 May

How am I to overtake events? On Wednesday, as soon as my mail was finished, I had a wild whirl to look forward to. Immediately after dinner, Belle, Lloyd and I, set out on horseback, they to the club, I to Haggard's, thence to the hotel where I had supper ready for them. All next day we hung round Apia with our whole house-crowd in Sunday array, hoping for the mail steamer with a menagerie on board. No such luck; the ship delayed; and at last, about three, I had to send them home again, a failure of a day's pleasuring that does not bear to be discussed. Lloyd was so sickened that he returned the same night to Vailima, Belle and I held on, sat most of the evening on the hotel verandah stricken silly with fatigue

1892 May leaky boat, without so much as an orange or a cocoanut on board, and under the direct rays of the sun. I had at last to stop him by taking the spare paddle off the outrigger and sticking it in the ground — depth, perhaps two feet — width of the bay, say three miles. At last I bid him land me and my mother and go back for the other ladies. "The coast is so rugged," said Salé. — "What?" I said, "all these villages and no landing-place?" — "Such is the nature of Samoans," said he. Well, I 'll find a landing-place, I thought; and presently I said, "Now we are going to land there." — "We can but try," said the bland Salé, with resignation. Never saw a better landing-place in my life. Here the boat joined us. My mother and Salé continued in the canoe alone, and Belle and I and Tauilo set off on foot for Malie. Tauilo was about the size of both of us put together and a piece over; she used us like a mouse with children. I had started barefoot; Belle had soon to pull off her

gala shoes and stockings; the mud was as deep as to our knees, and so slippery that (moving, as we did, in Indian file, between dense scratching tufts of sensitive) Belle and I had to take hands to support each other, and Tauilo was steadying Belle from the rear. You can conceive we were got up to kill, Belle in an embroidered white dress and white hat, I in a suit of Bedford cords hot from the Sydney tailors; and conceive us, below, ink-black to the knees with adhesive clay, and above, streaming with heat. I suppose it was better than three miles, but at last we made the end of Malie. I asked if we could find no water to wash our feet; and our nursemaid guided us to a pool. We sat down on the pool side, and our nursemaid washed our feet and legs for us — ladies first, I suppose out of a sudden respect to the insane European fancies: such a luxury as you can scarce imagine. I felt a new man after it. But before we got to the King's house we were sadly muddied once more. 1892 May

1892 May It was 1 P. M. when we arrived, the canoe having beaten us by about five minutes, so we made fair time over our bog-holes.

But the war dances were over, and we came in time to see only the tail end (some two hours) of the food presentation. In Mataafa's house three chairs were set for us covered with fine mats. Of course, a native house without the blinds down is like a verandah. All the green in front was surrounded with sheds, some of flapping canvas, some of green palm boughs, where (in three sides of a huge oblong) the natives sat by villages in a fine glow of many-hued array. There were folks in tapa, and folks in patchwork; there was every colour of the rainbow in a spot or a cluster; there were men with their heads gilded with powdered sandal-wood, others with heads all purple, stuck full of the petals of a flower. In the midst there was a growing field of outspread food, gradually covering acres; the gifts were brought in, now by chanting deputations, now by

carriers in a file; they were brandished aloft and declaimed over, with polite sacramental exaggerations, by the official receiver. He, a stalwart, well-oiled quadragenarian, shone with sweat from his exertions, brandishing cooked pigs. At intervals, from one of the squatted villages, an orator would arise. The field was almost beyond the reach of any human speaking voice; the proceedings besides continued in the midst; yet it was possible to catch snatches of this elaborate and cut-and-dry oratory — it was possible for me, for instance, to catch the description of my gift and myself as the *alii Tusitala, O le alii O malo tetele* — the chief White Information, the chief of the great Governments. Gay designation? In the house, in our three curule chairs, we sat and looked on. On our left a little group of the family. In front of us, at our feet, an ancient Talking-man, crowned with green leaves, his profile almost exactly Dante's; Popo his name. He had worshipped idols

1892 May

1892 May

No sooner was my food set out than I was to be going. I had a little serious talk with Mataafa on the floor, and we went down to the boat, where we got our food aboard, such a cargo — like the Swiss Family Robinson, we said. However, a squall began, Tauilo refused to let us go, and we came back to the house for half-an-hour or so, when my ladies distinguished themselves by walking through a Fono (council), my mother actually taking up a position between Mataafa and Popo! It was about five when we started — turtle, pigs, taro, etc., my mother, Belle, myself, Tauilo, a portly friend of hers with the voice of an angel, and a pronunciation so delicate and true that you could follow Samoan as she sang, and the two tired boys Frank and Jimmie, with the two bad oars and the two slippery rowlocks to impel the whole. Salé Taylor took the canoe and a strong Samoan to paddle him. Presently after he went in shore, and passed us a little after, with his arms folded, and *two*

present for "the chief of the great powers." I should say the gifts were, on the proper signal, dragged out of the field of food by a troop of young men, all with their lava-lavas kilted almost into a loin-cloth. The art is to swoop on the food-field, pick up with unerring swiftness the right things and quantities, swoop forth again on the open, and separate, leaving the gifts in a new pile: so you may see a covey of birds in a corn-field. This reminds me of a very inhumane but beautiful passage I had forgotten in its place. The gift-giving was still in full swing, when there came a troop of some ninety men all in tafa lava-lavas of a purplish colour; they paused, and of a sudden there went up from them high into the air a flight of live chickens, which, as they came down again, were sent again into the air, for perhaps a minute, from the midst of a singular turmoil of flying arms and shouting voices; I assure you, it was very beautiful to see, but how many chickens were killed? 1892 May

1892 May still barefoot, were quite restored by laving in it.

All this time I had kept my temper, and refrained as far as might be from any interference, for I saw (in our friend's mulish humour) he always contrived to twist it to our disadvantage. But now came the acute point. Young Frank now took an oar. He was a little fellow, near as frail as myself, and very short; if he weighed nine stone, it was the outside; but his blood was up. He took stroke, moved the big Samoan forward to bow, and set to work to pull him round in fine style. Instantly a kind of race competition — almost race hatred — sprang up. We jeered the Samoan. Salé declared it was the trim of the boat: "if this lady was aft" (Tauilo's portly friend) "he would row round Frank." We insisted on her coming aft, and Frank still rowed round the Samoan. When the Samoan caught a crab (the thing was continual with these wretched oars and rowlocks), *we* shouted

and jeered; when Frank caught one, Salé and the Samoan jeered and yelled. But anyway the boat moved, and presently we got up with Mulinuu, where I finally lost my temper, when I found that Salé proposed to go ashore and make a visit — in fact, we all three did. It is not worth while going into, but I must give you one snatch of the subsequent conversation as we pulled round Apia bay. "This Samoan," said Salé, "received seven German bullets in the field of Fangalii." "I am delighted to hear it," said Belle. "His brother was killed there," pursued Salé; and Belle, prompt as an echo, "Then there are no more of the family? how delightful!" Salé was sufficiently surprised to change the subject; he began to praise Frank's rowing with insufferable condescension: "But it is after all not to be wondered at," said he, "because he has been for some time a sailor. My good man, is it three or five years that you have been to sea?" And Frank, in a defiant shout: "Two!" 1892 May

1892 May Whereupon, so high did the ill-feeling run, that we three clapped and applauded and shouted, so that the President (whose house we were then passing) doubtless started at the sounds. It was nine when we got to the hotel; at first no food was to be found, but we skirmished up some bread and cheese and beer and brandy; and (having changed our wet clothes for the rather less wet in our bags) supped on the verandah.

Saturday 28th. I was wakened about 6.30, long past my usual hour, by a benevolent passer-by. My turtle lay on the verandah at my door, and the man woke me to tell me it was dead, as it had been when we put it on board the day before. All morning I ran the gauntlet of men and woman coming up to me: "Mr. Stevenson, your turtle is dead." I gave half of it to the hotel keeper, so that his cook should cut it up; and we got a damaged shell, and two splendid meals, beefsteak one day and soup the next. The horses came for us

about 9.30. It was waterspouting; we were drenched before we got out of the town; the road was a fine going Highland trout stream; it thundered deep and frequent, and my mother's horse would not better on a walk. At last she took pity on us, and very nobly proposed that Belle and I should ride ahead. We were mighty glad to do so, for we were cold. Presently, I said I should ride back for my mother, but it thundered again; Belle is afraid of thunder, and I decided to see her through the forest before I returned for my other hen — I may say, my other wet hen. About the middle of the wood, where it is roughest and steepest, we met three pack-horses with barrels of lime-juice. I piloted Belle past these — it is not very easy in such a road — and then passed them again myself, to pilot my mother. This effected, it began to thunder again, so I rode on hard after Belle. When I caught up with her, she was singing Samoan hymns to support her terrors! We were all back, changed,

1892 May

1892 May and at table by lunch time, 11 A. M. Nor have any of us been the worse for it sinsyne. That is pretty good for a woman of my mother's age and an invalid of my standing; above all, as Tauilo was laid up with a bad cold, probably increased by rage.

Friday, 3rd June.

June On Wednesday the club could not be held, and I must ride down town and to and fro all afternoon delivering messages, then dined and rode up by the young moon. I had plenty news when I got back; there is great talk in town of my deportation: it is thought they have written home to Downing Street requesting my removal, which leaves me not much alarmed; what I do rather expect is that H. J. Moors and I may be haled up before the C. J. to stand a trial for *lèse*-Majesty. Well, we 'll try and live it through.

The rest of my history since Monday has been unadulterated *David Balfour*. In season and out of season, night and day,

David and his innocent harem — let me be just, he never has more than the two — are on my mind. Think of David Balfour with a pair of fair ladies — very nice ones too — hanging round him. I really believe David is as good a character as anybody has a right to ask for in a novel. I have finished drafting Chapter xx. to-day, and feel it all ready to froth when the spigot is turned. 1892 June

Oh, I forgot — and do forget. What did I mean? A waft of cloud has fallen on my mind, and I will write no more.

Wednesday, I believe, 8th June.

Lots of David, and lots of David, and the devil any other news. Yesterday we were startled by great guns firing a salute, and to-day Whitmee (missionary) rode up to lunch, and we learned it was the *Curaçoa* come in, the ship (according to rumour) in which I was to be deported. I went down to meet my fate, and the captain is to dine with me Saturday, so I guess I am not going this voyage. Even with the par-

1892 June

ticularity with which I write to you, how much of my life goes unexpressed; my troubles with a madman by the name of ——, a genuine living lunatic, I believe, and jolly dangerous; my troubles about poor ——, all these have dropped out; yet for moments they were very instant, and one of them is always present with me.

I have finished copying Chapter XXI. of David — "*Solus cum sola;* we travel together." Chapter XXII., "*Solus cum sola;* we keep house together," is already drafted. To the end of XXI., makes more than 150 pages of my manuscript — damn this hair — and I only designed the book to run to about 200; but when you introduce the female sect, a book does run away with you. I am very curious to see what you will think of my two girls. My own opinion is quite clear; I am in love with both. I foresee a few pleasant years of spiritual flirtations. The creator (if I may name myself, for the sake of argument, by such a name) is essentially unfaithful. For the

duration of the two chapters in which I dealt with Miss Grant, I totally forgot my heroine, and even — but this is a flat secret — tried to win away David. I think I must try some day to marry Miss Grant. I 'm blest if I don't think I 've got that hair out! which seems triumph enough; so I conclude. 1892 June

Tuesday.

Your infinitesimal correspondence has reached me, and I have the honour to refer to it with scorn. It contains only one statement of conceivable interest, that your health is better; the rest is null, and so far as disquisitory unsound. I am all right, but David Balfour is ailing; this came from my visit to the man-of-war, where I had a cup of tea, and the most of that night walked the verandah with extraordinary convictions of guilt and ruin, many of which (but not all) proved to have fled with the day, taking David along with them; he R. I. P. in Chapter XXII.

On Saturday I went down to the town,

1892 June and fetched up Captain Gibson to dinner; Sunday I was all day at Samoa, and had a pile of visitors. Yesterday got my mail, including your despicable sheet; was fooled with a visit from the high chief Asi, went down at 4 P. M. to my Samoan lesson from Whitmee — I think I shall learn from him, he does not fool me with cockshot rules that are demolished next day, but professes ignorance like a man; the truth is, the grammar has still to be expiscated — dined with Haggard, and got home about nine.

Wednesday.

The excellent Clarke up here almost all day yesterday, a man I esteem and like to the soles of his boots; I prefer him to any one in Samoa, and to most people in the world; a real good missionary, with the inestimable advantage of having grown up a layman. Pity they all can't get that! It recalls my old proposal, which delighted Lady Taylor so much, that every divinity student should be thirty years old at least

before he was admitted. Boys switched out of college into a pulpit, what chance have they? That any should do well amazes me, and the most are just what was to be expected. 1892 June

Saturday.

I must tell you of our feast. It was long promised to the boys, and came off yesterday in one of their new houses. My good Simelé arrived from Savaii that morning asking for political advice; then we had Tauilo; Elena's father, a talking-man of Tauilo's family; Talolo's cousin; and a boy of Simelé's family, who attended on his dignity; then Metu, the meat-man — you have never heard of him, but he is a great person in our household — brought a lady and a boy — and there was another infant — eight guests in all. And we sat down thirty strong. You should have seen our procession, going (about two o'clock), all in our best clothes, to the hall of feasting! All in our Sunday's best. The new house had been hurriedly finished; the

1892 June rafters decorated with flowers; the floor spread, native style, with green leaves; we had given a big porker, twenty-five pounds of fresh beef, a tin of biscuit, cocoanuts, etc. Our places were all arranged with much care; the native ladies of the house facing our party; the sides filled up by the men; the guests, please observe: the two chief people, male and female, were placed with our family, the rest between S. and the native ladies. After the feast was over, we had kava, and the calling of the kava was a very elaborate affair, and I thought had like to have made Simelé very angry; he is really a considerable chief, but he and Tauilo were not called till after all our family, *and the guests*, I suppose the principle being that he was still regarded as one of the household. I forgot to say that our black boy did not turn up when the feast was ready. Off went the two cooks, found him, decorated him with huge red hybiscus flowers — he was in a very dirty under shirt — brought

him back between them like a reluctant maid, and thrust him into a place between Faauma and Elena, where he was petted and ministered to. When his turn came in the kava drinking — and you may be sure, in their contemptuous, affectionate kindness for him, as for a good dog, in came rather earlier than it ought — he was cried under a new name. *Aleki* is what they make of his own name Arrick; but instead of { the cup of / "le ipu o } Aleki!" it was called "le ipu o *Vailima*" and it was explained that he had "taken his chief-name!" a jest at which the plantation still laughs. Kava done, I made a little speech, Henry translating. If I had been well, I should have alluded to all, but I was scarce able to sit up; so only alluded to my guest of all this month, the Tongan, Tomas, and to Simelé, partly for the jest of making him translate compliments to himself. The talking-man replied with many handsome compliments to me, in

1892 June

1892 June the usual flood of Samoan fluent neatness; and we left them to an afternoon of singing and dancing. Must stop now, as my right hand is very bad again. I am trying to write with my left.

Sunday.

About half-past eight last night, I had gone to my own room, Fanny and Lloyd were in Fanny's, every one else in bed, only two boys on the premises — the two little brown boys Mitaiele (Michael), age I suppose 11 or 12, and the new steward, a Wallis islander, speaking no English and about fifty words of Samoan, recently promoted from the bush work, and a most good, anxious, timid lad of 15 or 16 — looks like 17 or 18, of course — they grow fast here. In comes Mitaiele to Lloyd, and told some rigmarole about Paatalise (the steward's name) wanting to go and see his family in the bush. — "But he has no family in the bush," said Lloyd. "No," said Mitaiele. They went to the boy's bed (they sleep in the walled-in

compartment of the verandah, once my dressing room) and called at once for me. He lay like one asleep, talking in drowsy tones but without excitement, and at times "cheeping" like a frightened mouse; he was quite cool to the touch, and his pulse not fast; his breathing seemed wholly ventral; the bust still, the belly moving strongly. Presently, he got from his bed, and ran for the door, with his head down not three feet from the floor and his body all on a stretch forward, like a striking snake: I say "ran," but this strange movement was not swift. Lloyd and I mastered him and got him back in bed. Soon there was another and more desperate attempt to escape, in which Lloyd had his ring broken. Then we bound him to the bed humanely with sheets, ropes, boards and pillows. He lay there and sometimes talked, sometimes whispered, sometimes wept like an angry child; his principal word was "Faamolemole" — "Please" — and he kept telling us at intervals that his

1892 June

1892 June family were calling him. During this interval, by the special grace of God, my boys came home; we had already called in Arrick, the black boy, now we had that Hercules, Lafaele, and a man Savea, who comes from Paatalise's own island and can alone communicate with him freely. Lloyd went to bed, I took the first watch, and sat in my room reading, while Lafaele and Arrick watched the madman. Suddenly Arrick called me; I ran into the verandah; there was Paatalise free of all his bonds and Lafaele holding him. To tell what followed is impossible. We were five people at him — Lafaele and Savea, very strong men, Lloyd, I and Arrick, and the struggle lasted until 1 A. M. before we had him bound. One detail for a specimen; Lloyd and I had charge of one leg, we were both sitting on it, and lo! we were both tossed into the air — I, I dare say, a couple of feet. At last we had him spread-eagled to the iron bedstead, by his wrists and ankles, with matted rope; a

most inhumane business, but what could we do? it was all we could do to manage it even so. The strength of the paroxysms had been steadily increasing, and we trembled for the next. And now I come to pure Rider Haggard. Lafaele announced that the boy was very bad, and he would get "some medicine" which was a family secret of his own. Some leaves were brought mysteriously in; chewed, placed on the boy's eyes, dropped in his ears (see Hamlet) and stuck up his nostrils; as he did this, the weird doctor partly smothered the patient with his hand; and by about 2 A. M. he was in a deep sleep, and from that time he showed no symptom of dementia whatever. The medicine (says Lafaele) is principally used for the wholesale slaughter of families; he himself feared last night that his dose was fatal; only one other person, on this island, knows the secret; and she, Lafaele darkly whispers, has abused it. This remarkable tree we must try to identify. 1892 June

1892 June

The man-of-war doctor came up to-day, gave us a straight-waistcoat, taught us to bandage, examined the boy and saw he was apparently well — he insisted on doing his work all morning, poor lad, and when he first came down kissed all the family at breakfast! The Doctor was greatly excited, as may be supposed, about Lafaele's medicine.

Tuesday.

All yesterday writing my mail by the hand of Belle, to save my wrist. This is a great invention, to which I shall stick, if it can be managed. We had some alarm about Paatalise, but he slept well all night for a benediction. This lunatic asylum exercise has no attractions for any of us.

I don't know if I remembered to say how much pleased I was with *Across the Plains* in every way, inside and out, and you and me. The critics seem to taste it, too, as well as could be hoped, and I believe it will continue to bring me in a few shil-

lings a year for a while. But such books pay only indirectly. 1892 June

To understand the full horror of the mad scene, and how well my boys behaved, remember that they *believed P.'s ravings*, they *knew* that his dead family, thirty strong, crowded the front verandah and called on him to come to the other world. They *knew* that his dead brother had met him that afternoon in the bush and struck him on both temples. And remember! we are fighting the dead, and they had to go out again in the black night, which is the dead man's empire. Yet last evening, when I thought P. was going to repeat the performance, I sent down for Lafaele, who had leave of absence, and he and his wife came up about eight o'clock with a lighted brand. These are the things for which I have to forgive my old cattle-man his manifold shortcomings; they are heroic —so are the shortcomings, to be sure.

It came over me the other day suddenly that this diary of mine to you would make

1892 June

good pickings after I am dead, and a man could make some kind of a book out of it without much trouble. So, for God's sake, don't lose them, and they will prove a piece of provision for my "poor old family," as Simelé calls it.

About my coming to Europe, I get more and more doubtful, and rather incline to Ceylon again as place of meeting. I am so absurdly well here in the tropics, that it seems like affectation. Yet remember I have never once stood Sydney. Anyway, I shall have the money for it all ahead, before I think of such a thing.

We had a bowl of Punch on your birthday, which my incredible mother somehow knew and remembered.

I sometimes sit and yearn for anything in the nature of an income that would come in — mine has all got to be gone and fished for with the immortal mind of man. What I want is the income that really comes in of itself while all you have to do is just to blossom and exist and sit on

chairs. Think how beautiful it would be not to have to mind the critics, and not even the darkest of the crowd — Sidney Colvin. I should probably amuse myself with works that would make your hair curl, if you had any left. 1892 June

R. L. S.

XX

Saturday, 2nd July, 1892.

1892 July

THE character of my handwriting is explained, alas! by scrivener's cramp. This also explains how long I have let the paper lie plain.

1 P. M.

I was busy copying David Balfour with my left hand — a most laborious task — Fanny was down at the native house superintending the floor, Lloyd down in Apia, and Belle in her own house cleaning, when I heard the latter calling on my name. I ran out on the verandah; and there on the lawn beheld my crazy boy with an axe in his hand and dressed out in green ferns, dancing. I ran downstairs and found all my house boys on the back verandah, watching him through the dining-room. I asked what it meant? — "Dance belong his place," they said. — "I think this no time

to dance," said I. "Has he done his work?" — "No," they told me, "away bush all morning." But there they all stayed on the back verandah. I went on alone through the dining-room, and bade him stop. He did so, shouldered the axe, and began to walk away; but I called him back, walked up to him, and took the axe out of his unresisting hands. The boy is in all things so good, that I can scarce say I was afraid; only I felt it had to be stopped ere he could work himself up by dancing to some craziness. Our house boys protested they were not afraid; all I know is they were all watching him round the back door and did not follow me till I had the axe. As for the out boys, who were working with Fanny in the native house, they thought it a very bad business, and made no secret of their fears. 1892 July

Wednesday, 6th.

I have no account to give of my stewardship these days, and there 's a day more to account for than mere arithmetic would

1892 July tell you. For we have had two Monday Fourths, to bring us at last on the right side of the meridian, having hitherto been an exception in the world and kept our private date. Business has filled my hours sans intermision.

Tuesday, 12th.

I am doing no work and my mind is in abeyance. Fanny and Belle are sewing-machining in the next room; I have been pulling down their hair, and Fanny has been kicking me, and now I am driven out. Austin I have been chasing about the verandah; now he has gone to his lessons, and I make believe to write to you in despair. But there is nothing in my mind; I swim in mere vacancy, my head is like a rotten nut; I shall soon have to begin to work again or I shall carry away some part of the machinery. I have got your insufficient letter, for which I scorn to thank you. I have had no review by Gosse, none by Birrell; another time if I have a letter in the *Times*, you might send

me the text as well; also please send me a cricket bat and a cake, and when I come home for the holidays, I should like to have a pony. 1892 July

I am, sir, you obedient servant,

JACOB TONSON.

P.S. I am quite well; I hope you are quite well. The world is too much with us, and my mother bids me bind my hair and lace my bodice blue.

XXI

1892 Aug. My dear Colvin, — This is Friday night, the (I believe) 18th or 20th August or September. I shall probably regret to-morrow having written you with my own hand like the Apostle Paul. But I am alone over here in the workman's house, where I and Belle and Lloyd and Austin are pigging; the rest are at cards in the main residence. I have not joined them because "belly belong me" has been kicking up, and I have just taken 15 drops of laudanum.

On Tuesday, the party set out — self in white cap, velvet coat, cords and yellow half boots, Belle in a white kind of suit and white cap to match mine, Lloyd in white clothes and long yellow boots and a straw hat, Graham in khakis and gaiters, Henry (my old overseer) in blue coat and

black kilt, and the great Lafaele with a big ship-bag on his saddle-bow. We left the mail at the P. O., had lunch at the hotel, and about 1.50 set out westward to the place of tryst.[1] This was by a little shrunken brook in a deep channel of mud, on the far side of which, in a thicket of low trees, all full of moths of shadow and butterflies of sun, we lay down to await her ladyship. Whiskey and water, then a sketch of the encampment for which we all posed to Belle, passed off the time until 3.30. Then I could hold on no longer. 30 minutes late. Had the secret oozed out? Were they arrested? I got my horse, crossed the brook again, and rode hard back to the Vaea cross roads, whence 1892 Aug.

[1] The expedition to Mataafa's camp, of which the history is thus introduced without preface, was one undertaken in company with the Countess of Jersey and some members of her family, who were then on a visit to the island. Owing to the position of Mataafa as a rival or "rebel" king, Lady Jersey's visit, which was of course one of curiosity merely, had to be made unofficially, and so far as might be *incognita*. Readers will find an account of it in her own words, *Nineteenth Century*, Jan. 1893.

1892 Aug. I was aware of white clothes glancing in the other long straight radius of the quadrant. I turned at once to return to the place of tryst; but D. overtook me, and almost bore me down, shouting "Ride, ride!" like a hero in a ballad. Lady Margaret and he were only come to show the place; they returned, and the rest of our party, reinforced by Captain Leigh and Lady Jersey, set on for Malie. The delay was due to D.'s infinite precautions, leading them up lanes, by back ways, and then down again to the beach road a hundred yards further on.

It was agreed that Lady Jersey existed no more; she was now my cousin Amelia Balfour. That relative and I headed the march; she is a charming woman, all of us like her extremely after trial on this somewhat rude and absurd excursion. And we Amelia'd or Miss Balfour'd her with great but intermittent fidelity. When we came to the last village, I sent Henry on ahead to warn the King of our approach and

amend his discretion, if that might be. As he left I heard the villagers asking *which was the great lady?* And a little further, at the borders of Malie itself, we found the guard making a music of bugles and conches. Then I knew the game was up and the secret out. A considerable guard of honour, mostly children, accompanied us; but for our good fortune, we had been looked for earlier, and the crowd was gone. 1892 Aug.

Dinner at the King's; he asked me to say grace, I could think of none — never could; Graham suggested *Benedictus Benedicat*, at which I leaped. We were nearly done, when old Popo inflicted the Atua howl (of which you have heard already) right at Lady Jersey's shoulder. She started in fine style. — "There," I said, "we have been giving you a chapter of Scott, but this goes beyond the Waverley Novels." After dinner, kava. Lady J. was served before me, and the King *drank last;* it was the least formal kava I ever saw in that

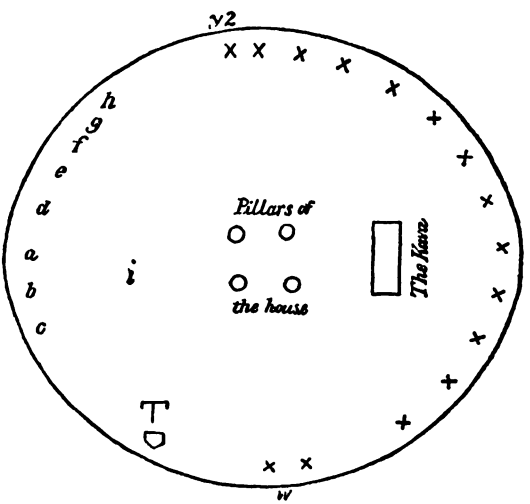
1892 Aug. house, — no names called, no show of ceremony. All my ladies are well trained, and when Belle drained her bowl, the King was pleased to clap his hands. Then he and I must retire for our private interview, to another house. He gave me his own staff and made me pass before him; and in the interview, which was long and delicate, he twice called me *afioga*. Ah, that leaves you cold, but I am Samoan enough to have been moved. *Susuga* is my accepted rank; to be called *afioga* — Heavens! what an advance — and it leaves Europe cold. But it staggered my Henry. The first time it was complicated "lana susuga *ma* lana afioga — his excellency *and* his majesty" — the next time plain Majesty. Henry then begged to interrupt the interview and tell who he was — he is a small family chief in Sawaii, not very small — "I do not wish the King," says he, "to think me a boy from Apia." On our return to the palace, we separated. I had asked for the ladies to sleep alone — that was under-

stood; but that Tusitala — his afioga Tusitala — should go out with the other young men, and not sleep with the high-born females of his family — was a doctrine received with difficulty. Lloyd and I had one screen, Graham and Leigh another, and we slept well. 1892 Aug.

In the morning I was first abroad before dawn; not very long, already there was a stir of birds. A little after, I heard singing from the King's chapel — exceeding good — and went across in the hour when the east is yellow and the morning bank is breaking up, to hear it nearer. All about the chapel, the guards were posted, and all saluted Tusitala. I could not refrain from smiling: "So there is a place too," I thought, "where sentinels salute me." Mine has been a queer life.

Breakfast was rather a protracted business. And that was scarce over when we were called to the great house (now finished — recall your earlier letters) to see a royal kava. This function is of rare use; I

1892 Aug. know grown Samoans who have never witnessed it. It is, besides, as you are to hear, a piece of prehistoric history, crys-



tallised in figures, and the facts largely forgotten; an acted hieroglyph. The house is really splendid; in the rafters in the

midst, two carved and coloured model birds are posted; the only thing of the sort I have ever remarked in Samoa, the Samoans being literal observers of the second commandment. At one side of the egg our party sat. a = Mataafa, b = Lady J., c = Belle, d = Tusitala, e = Graham, f = Lloyd, g = Captain Leigh, h = Henry, i = Popo. The x's round are the high chiefs, each man in his historical position. One side of the house is set apart for the King alone; we were allowed there as his guests and Henry as our interpreter. It was a huge trial to the lad, when a speech was made to me which he must translate, and I made a speech in answer which he had to orate, full breathed, to that big circle; he blushed through his dark skin, but looked and acted like a gentleman and a young fellow of sense; then the kava came to the King; he poured one drop in libation, drank another, and flung the remainder outside the house behind him. Next came the turn of the old shapeless

1892 Aug.

1892 Aug. stone marked T. It stands for one of the King's titles, Tamasoalii; Mataafa is Tamasoalii this day, but cannot drink for it; and the stone must first be washed with water, and then have the bowl emptied on it. Then — the order I cannot recall — came the turn of y and z, two orators of the name of Malietoa; the first took his kava down plain, like an ordinary man; the second must be packed to bed under a big sheet of tapa, and be massaged by anxious assistants and rise on his elbow groaning to drink his cup. W., a great hereditary war man, came next; five times the cup-bearers marched up and down the house and passed the cup on, five times it was filled and the General's name and titles heralded at the bowl, and five times he refused it (after examination) as too small. It is said this commemorates a time when Malietoa at the head of his army suffered much for want of supplies. Then this same military gentleman must *drink* five cups, one from each of the great

names: all which took a precious long time. He acted very well, haughtily and in a society tone *outlining* the part. The difference was marked when he subsequently made a speech in his own character as a plain God-fearing chief. A few more high chiefs, then Tusitala; one more, and then Lady Jersey; one more, and then Captain Leigh, and so on with the rest of our party — Henry of course excepted. You see in public, Lady Jersey followed me — just so far was the secret kept. 1892 Aug.

Then we came home; Belle, Graham and Lloyd to the Chinaman's, I with Lady Jersey, to lunch; so, severally home. Thursday I have forgotten: Saturday, I began again on Davie; on Sunday, the Jersey party came up to call and carried me to dinner. As I came out, to ride home, the search-lights of the *Curaçoa* were lightening on the horizon from many miles away, and next morning she came in. Tuesday was huge fun: a reception at Haggard's. All our party dined there;

1892 Aug. Lloyd and I, in the absence of Haggard and Leigh, had to play aide-de-camp and host for about twenty minutes, and I presented the population of Apia at random but (luck helping) without one mistake. Wednesday we had two middies to lunch. Thursday we had Eeles and Hoskyn (lieutenant and doctor — very, very nice fellows — simple, good and not the least dull) to dinner. Saturday, Graham and I lunched on board; Graham, Belle, Lloyd dined at the G.'s; and Austin and the *whole* of our servants went with them to an evening entertainment; the more bold returning by lantern-light. Yesterday, Sunday, Belle and I were off by about half past eight, left our horses at a public house, and went on board the *Curaçoa* in the wardroom skiff; were entertained in the wardroom; thence on deck to the service, which was a great treat; three fiddles and a harmonium and excellent choir, and the great ship's company joining: on shore in Haggard's big boat to lunch with the party. Thence all

together to Vailima, where we read aloud a Ouida Romance we have been secretly writing; in which Haggard was the hero, and each one of the authors had to draw a portrait of him or herself in a Ouida light. Leigh, Lady J., Fanny, R. L. S., Belle and Graham were the authors. 1892 Aug.

In the midst of this gay life, I have finally recopied two chapters, and drafted for the first time three of Davie Balfour. But it is not a life that would continue to suit me, and if I have not continued to write to you, you will scarce wonder. And to-day we all go down again to dinner, and to-morrow they all come up to lunch! The world is too much with us. But it now nears an end, to-day already the *Curaçoa* has sailed; and on Saturday or Sunday Lady Jersey will follow them in the mail steamer. I am sending you a wire by her hands as far as Sydney, that is to say either you or Cassell, about *Falesá:* I will not allow it to be called *Uma* in book form, that is not the logical name of

1892 Aug. the story. Nor can I have the marriage contract omitted; and the thing is full of misprints abominable. In the picture, Uma is rot; so is the old man and the negro; but Wiltshire is splendid, and Case will do. It seems badly illuminated, but this may be printing. How have I seen this first number? Not through your attention, guilty one! Lady Jersey had it, and only mentioned it yesterday.[1]

I ought to say how much we all like the Jersey party. My boy Henry was enraptured with the manners of the *Tawaitai Sili* (chief lady). Among our other occupations, I did a bit of a supposed epic describing our tryst at the ford of the Gase-gase; and Belle and I made a little book of caricatures and verses about incidents on the visit.

Tuesday.

The wild round of gaiety continues. After I had written to you yesterday, the

[1] I had not cared to send him the story as thus docked and re-christened in its serial shape.

brain being wholly extinct, I played piquet all morning with Graham. After lunch down to call on the U. S. Consul, hurt in a steeple-chase; thence back to the new girls' school which Lady J. was to open, and where my ladies met me. Lady J. is really an orator, with a voice of gold; the rest of us played our unremarked parts; missionaries, Haggard, myself, a Samoan chief, holding forth in turn; myself with (at least) a golden brevity. Thence, Fanny, Belle, and I to town, to our billiard-room in Haggard's back garden, where we found Lloyd and where Graham joined us. The three men first dressed, with the ladies in a corner; and then, to leave them a free field, we went off to Haggard and Leigh's quarters, whereafter all to dinner, where our two parties, a brother of Colonel Kitchener's, a passing globe-trotter, and Clarke the missionary. A very gay evening, with all sorts of chaff and mirth, and a moonlit ride home, and to bed before 12.30. And now to-day, we have the

1892 Aug.

1892 Aug. Jersey-Haggard troupe to lunch, and I must pass the morning dressing ship.

Thursday, Sept. 1st.

Sept. I sit to write to you now, 7.15, all the world in bed except myself, accounted for, and Belle and Graham, down at Haggard's at dinner. Not a leaf is stirring here; but the moon overhead (now of a good bigness) is obscured and partly revealed in a whirling covey of thin storm-clouds. By Jove, it blows above.

From 8 till 11.15 on Tuesday, I dressed ship, and in particular cleaned crystal, my specialty. About 11.30 the guests began to arrive before I was dressed, and between while I had written a parody for Lloyd to sing. Yesterday, Wednesday, I had to start out about 3 for town, had a long interview with the head of the German Firm about some work in my new house, got over to Lloyd's billiard-room about six, on the way whither I met Fanny and Belle coming down with one Kitchener, a

brother of the Colonel's. Dined in the billiard-room, discovered we had forgot to order oatmeal; whereupon, in the moonlit evening, I set forth in my tropical array, mess jacket and such, to get the oatmeal, and meet a young fellow C. — and not a bad young fellow either, only an idiot — as drunk as Crœsus. He wept with me, he wept for me; he talked like a bad character in an impudently bad farce; I could have laughed aloud to hear, and could make you laugh by repeating, but laughter was not uppermost. 1892 Sept.

This morning at about seven, I set off after the lost sheep. I could have no horse; all that could be mounted — we have one girth-sore and one dead-lame in the establishment — were due at a picnic about 10.30. The morning was very wet, and I set off barefoot, with my trousers over my knees, and a mackintosh. Presently I had to take a side path in the bush; missed it; came forth in a great oblong patch of taro solemnly surrounded by forest

1892 Sept. — no soul, no sign, no sound — and as I stood there at a loss, suddenly between the showers out broke the note of a harmonium and a woman's voice singing an air that I know very well, but have (as usual) forgot the name of. 'T was from a great way off, but seemed to fill the world. It was strongly romantic, and gave me a point which brought me, by all sorts of forest wading, to an open space of palms. These were of all ages, but mostly at that age when the branches arch from the ground level, range themselves, with leaves exquisitely green. The whole interspace was overgrown with convolvulus, purple, yellow and white, often as deep as to my waist, in which I floundered aimlessly. The very mountain was invisible from here. The rain came and went; now in sunlit April showers, now with the proper tramp and rattle of the tropics. All this while I met no sight or sound of man, except the voice which was now silent, and a damned pig-fence that headed me off at every corner.

Do you know barbed wire? Think of a fence of it on rotten posts, and you barefoot. But I crossed it at last with my heart in my mouth and no harm done. Thence at last to C.'s.: no C. Next place I came to was in the zone of woods. They offered me a buggy and set a black boy to wash my legs and feet. "Washum legs belong that fellow white-man" was the command. So at last I ran down my son of a gun in the hotel, sober, and with no story to tell; penitent, I think. Home, by buggy and my poor feet, up three miles of root, boulder, gravel and liquid mud, slipping back at every step. 1892 Sept.

Sunday, Sept. 4th.

Hope you will be able to read a word of the last, no joke writing by a bad lantern with a groggy hand and your glasses mislaid. Not that the hand is not better, as you see by the absence of the amanuensis hitherto. Mail came Friday, and a communication from yourself much more decent

1892 Sept. than usual, for which I thank you. Glad the *Wrecker* should so hum; but Lord, what fools these mortals be!

So far yesterday, the citation being wrung from me by remembrance of many reviews. I have now received all *Falesá*, and my admiration for that tale rises, I believe it is in some ways my best work; I am pretty sure, at least, I have never done anything better than Wiltshire.

Monday, 12th September, 1892.

On Wednesday the Spinsters of Apia gave a ball to a select crowd. Fanny, Belle, Lloyd and I rode down, met Haggard by the way and joined company with him. Dinner with Haggard, and thence to the ball. The Chief Justice appeared; it was immediately remarked, and whispered from one to another, that he and I had the only red sashes in the room, — and they were both of the hue of blood, sir, blood. He shook hands with myself and all the members of my family. Then the cream

came, and I found myself in the same set of a quadrille with his honour. We dance here in Apia a most fearful and wonderful quadrille, I don't know where the devil they fished it from; but it is rackety and prancing and embraceatory beyond words; perhaps it is best defined in Haggard's expression of a gambado. When I and my great enemy found ourselves involved in this gambol, and crossing hands, and kicking up, and being embraced almost in common by large and quite respectable females, we — or I — tried to preserve some rags of dignity, but not for long. The deuce of it is that, personally, I love this man; his eye speaks to me, I am pleased in his society. We exchanged a glance, and then a grin; the man took me in his confidence; and through the remainder of that prance, we pranced for each other. Hard to imagine any position more ridiculous; a week before he had been trying to rake up evidence against me by browbeating and threatening a half-white inter- 1892 Sept.

1892 Sept. preter; that very morning I had been writing most villainous attacks upon him for the *Times;* and we meet and smile, and — damn it! — like each other. I do my best to damn the man and drive him from these islands; but the weakness endures — I love him. This is a thing I would despise in anybody else; but he is so jolly insidious and ingratiating! No, sir, I can't dislike him; but if I don't make hay of him, it shall not be for want of trying.

Yesterday, we had two Germans and a young American boy to lunch; and in the afternoon, Vailima was in a state of siege; ten white people on the front verandah, at least as many brown in the cook house, and countless blacks to see the black boy Arrick.

Which reminds me, Arrick was sent Friday was a week to the German Firm with a note, and was not home on time. Lloyd and I were going bedward, it was late with a bright moon — ah, poor dog, you know no such moons as these! — when

home came Arrick with his head in a white bandage and his eyes shining. He had had a fight with other blacks, Malaita boys; many against one, and one with a knife: "I KNICKED 'EM DOWN, three four!" he cried; and had himself to be taken to the doctor's and bandaged. Next day, he could not work, glory of battle swelled too high in his threadpaper breast; he had made a one-stringed harp for Austin, borrowed it, came to Fanny's room, and sang war-songs and danced a war dance in honour of his victory. And it appears, by subsequent advices, that it was a serious victory enough; four of his assailants went to hospital, and one is thought in danger. All Vailima rejoiced at this news. 1892 Sept.

Five more chapters of David, 22 to 27, go to Baxter. All love affair; seems pretty good to me. Will it do for the young person? I don't know: since the Beach, I know nothing, except that men are fools and hypocrites, and I know less of them than I was fond enough to fancy.

XXII

Thursday, 15th September.

1892 Sept.

My dear Colvin, — On Tuesday, we had our young adventurer[1] ready, and Fanny, Belle, he and I set out about three of a dark, deadly hot, and deeply unwholesome afternoon. Belle had the lad behind her; I had a pint of champagne in either pocket, a parcel in my hands, and as Jack had a girth sore and I rode without a girth, I might be said to occupy a very unstrategic position. On the way down, a little dreary, beastly drizzle beginning to come out of the darkness, Fanny put up an umbrella, her horse bounded, reared, cannoned into me, cannoned into Belle and the lad, and bolted for home. It really might and ought to have been an A1 catastrophe; but nothing happened beyond

[1] Austin Strong, on his way to school in California.

Fanny's nerves being a good deal shattered; of course, she could not tell what had happened to us until she got her horse mastered. 1892 Sept.

Next day, Haggard went off to the Commission and left us in charge of his house; all our people came down in wreaths of flowers; we had a boat for them; Haggard had a flag in the Commission boat for us; and when at last the steamer turned up, the young adventurer was carried on board in great style, with a new watch and chain, and about three pound ten of tips, and five big baskets of fruit as free-will offerings to the captain. Captain Morse had us all to lunch; champagne flowed, so did compliments; and I did the affable celebrity life-sized. It made a great send-off for the young adventurer. As the boat drew off, he was standing at the head of the gangway, supported by three handsome ladies — one of them a real full-blown beauty, Madame Green, the singer — and looking very engaging himself, between smiles and tears. Not that he cried in public.

1892 Sept. My, but we were a tired crowd! However it is always a blessing to get home, and this time it was a sort of wonder to ourselves that we got back alive. Casualties: Fanny's back jarred, horse incident; Belle, bad headache, tears and champagne; self, idiocy, champagne, fatigue; Lloyd, ditto, ditto. As for the adventurer, I believe he will have a delightful voyage for his little start in life. But there is always something touching in a mite's first launch.

Date unknown.

I am now well on with the third part of the *Débâcle*. The two first I liked much; the second completely knocking me; so far as it has gone, this third part appears the ramblings of a dull man who has forgotten what he has to say — he reminds me of an M.P. But Sedan was really great, and I will pick no holes. The batteries under fire, the red-cross folk, the county charge —perhaps, above all, Major Bouroche and the operations, all beyond discus-

sion; and every word about the Emperor splendid. 1892 Sept.

September 30th.

David Balfour done, and its author along with it, or nearly so. Strange to think of even our doctor here repeating his nonsense about debilitating climate. Why, the work I have been doing the last twelve months, in one continuous spate, mostly with annoying interruptions and without any collapse to mention, would be incredible in Norway. But I *have* broken down now, and will do nothing as long as I possibly can. With David Balfour I am very well pleased; in fact these labours of the last year — I mean *Falesá* and *D. B.*, not Samoa, of course — seem to me to be nearer what I mean than anything I have ever done; nearer what I mean by fiction; the nearest thing before was *Kidnapped.* I am not forgetting the *Master of Ballantrae*, but that lacked all pleasurableness, and hence was imperfect in essence. So you see, if I am a little tired, I do not repent.

1892 Sept. The third part of the *Débâcle* may be all very fine; but I cannot read it. It suffers from *impaired vitality*, and *uncertain aim;* two deadly sicknesses.

Vital — that 's what I am at, first: wholly vital, with a buoyancy of life. Then lyrical, if it may be, and picturesque, always with an epic value of scenes, so that the figures remain in the mind's eye for ever.

October 8th.

Oct. Suppose you sent us some of the catalogues of the parties what vends statues? I don't want colossal Herculeses, but about quarter size and less. If the catalogues were illustrated it would probably be found a help to weak memories. These may be found to alleviate spare moments, when we sometimes amuse ourselves by thinking how fine we shall make the palace if we do not go pop. Perhaps in the same way it might amuse you to send us any pattern of wall paper that might strike you as cheap, pretty and suitable for a room in a

hot and extremely bright climate. It should be borne in mind that our climate can be extremely dark too. Our sitting-room is to be in varnished wood. The room I have particularly in mind is a sort of bed and sitting-room, pretty large, lit on three sides, and the colour in favour of its proprietor at present is a topazy yellow. But then with what colour to relieve it? For a little work-room of my own at the back, I should rather like to see some patterns of unglossy — well, I 'll be hanged if I can describe this red — it 's not Turkish and it 's not Roman and it 's not Indian, but it seems to partake of the two last and yet it can't be either of them because it ought to be able to go with vermillion. Ah, what a tangled web we weave — anyway, with what brains you have left choose me and send me some — many — patterns of this exact shade. 1892 Oct.

A few days ago it was Haggard's birthday and we had him and his cousin to dinner — bless me if I ever told you of his

1892 Oct. cousin! — he is here anyway, and a fine, pleasing specimen, so that we have concluded (after our own happy experience) that the climate of Samoa must be favourable to cousins.[1] Then we went out on the verandah in a lovely moonlight, drinking port, hearing the cousin play and sing, till presently we were informed that our boys had got up a siva in Lafaele's house to which we were invited. It was entirely their own idea. The house, you must understand, is one-half floored, and one-half bare earth, and the daïs stands a little over knee high above the level of the soil. The daïs was the stage, with three footlights. We audience sat on mats on the floor, and the cook and three of our workboys, sometimes assisted by our two ladies took their places behind the footlights and began a topical Vailima song. The

[1] The reference is to the writer's maternal cousin, Mr. Graham Balfour (*Samoicè*, "Pelema"), who during these months and afterwards was an inmate of the home at Vailima.

burden was of course that of a Samoan popular song about a white man who objects to all that he sees in Samoa. And there was of course a special verse for each one of the party — Lloyd was called the dancing man (practically the Chief's handsome son) of Vailima; he was also, in his character I suppose of overseer compared to a policeman — Belle had that day been the almoner in a semi-comic distribution of wedding rings and thimbles (bought cheap at an auction) to the whole plantation company, fitting a ring on every man's finger, and a ring and a thimble on both the women's. This was very much in character with her native name *Teuila*, the adorner of the ugly — so of course this was the point of her verse and at a given moment all the performers displayed the rings upon their fingers. Pelema (the cousin — *our* cousin) was described as watching from the house and whenever he saw any boy not doing anything, running and doing it himself. Fanny's verse was

1892 Oct.

1892 Oct. less intelligible, but it was accompanied in the dance with a pantomime of terror well-fitted to call up her haunting, indefatigable and diminutive presence in a blue gown.

XXIII

Vailima, October 28th, 1892.

1892 Oct. MY DEAR COLVIN, — This is very late to begin the monthly budget, but I have a good excuse this time, for I have had a very annoying fever with symptoms of sore arm, and in the midst of it a very annoying piece of business which suffered no delay or idleness. . . . The consequence of all this was that my fever got very much worse and your letter has not been hitherto written. But, my dear fellow, do compare these little larky fevers with the fine, healthy, prostrating colds of the dear old dead days at home. Here was I, in the middle of a pretty bad one, and I was able to put it in my pocket, and go down day after day, and attend to and put my strength into this beastly business. Do you see me doing that with a catarrh? And if

1892 Oct. I had done so, what would have been the result?

Last night, about four o'clock, Belle and I set off to Apia, whither my mother had preceded us. She was at the Mission; we went to Haggard's. There we had to wait the most unconscionable time for dinner. I do not wish to speak lightly of the Amanuensis, who is unavoidably present, but I may at least say for myself that I was as cross as two sticks. Dinner came at last, we had the tinned soup which is usually the *pièce de resistance* in the halls of Haggard and we pitched into it. Followed an excellent salad of tomatoes and cray-fish, a good Indian curry, a tender joint of beef, a dish of pigeons, a pudding, cheese and coffee. I was so over-eaten after this "hunger and burst" that I could scarcely move; and it was my sad fate that night in the character of the local author to eloquute before the public — "Mr. Stevenson will read a selection from his own works" — a degrading picture. I had

determined to read them the account of the hurricane, I do not know if I told you that my book has never turned up here, or rather only one copy has, and that in the unfriendly hands of ——. It has therefore only been seen by enemies; and this combination of mystery and evil report has been greatly envenomed by some ill-judged newspaper articles from the States. Altogether this specimen was listened to with a good deal of uncomfortable expectation on the part of the Germans, and when it was over was applauded with unmistakable relief. The public hall where these revels came off, seems to be unlucky for me; I never go there but to some stone-breaking job. Last time it was the public meeting of which I must have written you; this time it was this uneasy but not on the whole unsuccessful experiment. Belle, my mother and I rode home about midnight in a fine display of lightning and witch-fires. My mother is absent, so that I may dare to say that she struck me as voluble. The

1892 Oct.

1892 Oct. Amanuensis did not strike me the same way, she was probably thinking, but it was really rather a weird business, and I saw what I have never seen before, the witch-fires gathered into little bright blue points almost as bright as a night-light.

Saturday.

This is the day that should bring your letter; it is gray and cloudy and windless; thunder rolls in the mountain; it is a quarter past six, and I am alone, sir, alone in this workman's house, Belle and Lloyd having been down all yesterday to meet the steamer; they were scarce gone with most of the horses and all the saddles than there began a perfect picnic of the sick and maim; Iopu with a bad foot, Faauma with a bad shoulder, Fanny with yellow spots. It was at first proposed to carry all these to the doctor, particularly Faauma, whose shoudler bore an appearance of erysipelas, that sent the amateur below. No horses, no saddle. Now I had my horse

and I could borrow Lafaele's saddle; and if I went alone I could do a job that had long been waiting; and that was to interview the doctor on another matter. Off I set in a hazy moonlight night; windless, like to-day; the thunder rolling in the mountain, as to-day; in the still groves, these little mushroom lamps glowing blue and steady, singly or in pairs. Well, I had my interview, said everything as I had meant, and with just the result I hoped for. The doctor and I drank beer together and discussed German literature until nine, and we parted the best of friends. I got home to a silent house of sleepers, only Fanny awaiting me; we talked awhile, in whispers, on the interview; then, I got a lantern and went across to the workman's house, now empty and silent, myself sole occupant. So to bed, prodigious tired but mighty content with my night's work. And to-day, with a headache and a chill, have written you this page, while my new novel waits. Of this I will tell

1892 Oct.

1892 Oct. you nothing, except the various names under consideration. First, it ought to be called — but of course that is impossible —

Braxfield.[1]

Then it *is* to be called either

Weir of Hermiston,
The Lord-Justice Clerk,
The Two Kirsties of the Cauldstaneslap,
or
The Four Black Brothers.

Characters:

Adam Weir, Lord-Justice Clerk, called Lord Hermiston.
Archie, his son.
Aunt Kirstie Elliott, his housekeeper at Hermiston.
Elliott of the Cauldstaneslap, her brother.
Kirstie Elliott, his daughter.

[1] Robert MacQueen, Lord Braxfield, the "Hanging Judge," (1722–1799). This historical personage furnished the conception of the chief character, but by no means the details or incidents of the story, which is indeed dated some years after his death.

1892
Oct.

Jim, . .
Gib, . .
Hb . . } his sons.
&
Dandie, .

Patrick Innes, a young advocate.

The Lord-Justice General.

Scene, about Hermiston in the Lammermuirs and in Edinburgh. Temp. 1812. So you see you are to have another holiday from copra! The rain begins softly on the iron roof, and I will do the reverse and — dry up.

Sunday.

Yours with the diplomatic private opinion received. It is just what I should have supposed. *Ça m'est bien égal.* — The name is to be

The Lord-Justice Clerk.

None others are genuine. Unless it be[1]

Lord-Justice Clerk Hermiston.

[1] The name ultimately chosen was *Weir of Hermiston;* for the sequel, so far as concerns this story, see the Epilogue to this volume.

Nov. 2nd.

1892 Nov. On Saturday we expected Captain Morse of the Alameda to come up to lunch, and on Friday with genuine South Sea hospitality had a pig killed. On the Saturday morning no pig. Some of the boys seemed to give a doubtful account of themselves; our next neighbour below in the wood is a bad fellow and very intimate with some of our boys, for whom his confounded house is like a fly-paper for flies. To add to all this, there was on the Saturday a great public presentation of food to the King and Parliament men, an occasion on which it is almost dignified for a Samoan to steal anything, and entirely dignified for him to steal a pig.

(The Amanuensis went to the *talolo*, as it is called, and saw something so very pleasing she begs to interrupt the letter to tell it. The different villagers came in in bands — led by the maid of the village, followed by the young warriors. It was a very fine sight, for some three thousand people are said to have assembled. The men wore nothing but magnificent head-dresses and

a bunch of leaves, and were oiled and glistening in the sunlight. One band had no maid but was led by a tiny child of about five — a serious little creature clad in a ribbon of grass and a fine head-dress, who skipped with elaborate leaps in front of the warriors, like a little kid leading a band of lions. A.M.) 1892 Nov.

The A. M. being done, I go on again. All this made it very possible that even if none of our boys had stolen the pig, some of them might know the thief. Besides the theft, as it was a theft of meat prepared for a guest, had something of the nature of an insult and "my face" in native phrase "was ashamed." Accordingly, we determined to hold a bed of justice. It was done last night after dinner. I sat at the head of the table, Graham on my right hand, Henry Simelé at my left, Lloyd behind him. The house company sat on the floor around the walls — twelve all told. I am described as looking as like Braxfield as I could manage with my appearance; Graham, who is of a severe

1892 Nov. countenance, looked like Rhadamanthus; Lloyd was hideous to the view; and Simelé had all the fine solemnity of a Samoan chief. The proceedings opened by my delivering a Samoan prayer, which may be translated thus — "Our God, look down upon us and shine into our hearts. Help us to be far from falsehood so that each one of us may stand before Thy Face in his integrity." — Then, beginning with Simelé, every one came up to the table, laid his hand on the Bible, and repeated clause by clause after me the following oath — I fear it may sound even comic in English, but it is a very pretty piece of Samoan, and struck direct at the most lively superstitions of the race. "This is the Holy Bible here that I am touching. Behold me, O God! If I know who it was that took away the pig, or the place to which it was taken, or have heard anything relating to it, and shall not declare the same — be made an end of by God this life of mine!" They all took it with so much

seriousness and firmness that (as Graham said) if they were not innocent they would make invaluable witnesses. I was so far impressed by their bearing that I went no further, and the funny and yet strangely solemn scene came to an end. 1892 Nov.

Sunday, Nov. 6th.

Here is a long story to go back upon, and I wonder if I have either time or patience for the task?

Wednesday I had a great idea of match-making, and proposed to Henry that Faalé would make a good wife for him. I wish I had put this down when it was fresher in my mind, it was so interesting an interview. My gentleman would not tell if I were on or not. "I do not know yet; I will tell you next week. May I tell the sister of my father? No, better not, tell her when it is done." — "But will not your family be angry if you marry without asking them?" — "My village? What does my village want? Mats!" I said I

1892 Nov. thought the girl would grow up to have a great deal of sense, and my gentleman flew out upon me; she had sense now, he said.

Thursday, we were startled by the note of guns, and presently after heard it was an English war ship. Graham and I set off at once, and as soon as we met any townsfolk they began crying to me that I was to be arrested. It was the *Vossische Zeitung* article which had been quoted in a paper. Went on board and saw Captain Bourke, he did not even know — not even guess — why he was here; having been sent off by cablegram from Auckland. It is hoped the same ship that takes this off Europewards may bring his orders and our news. But which is it to be? Heads or tails? If it is to be German, I hope they will deport me; I should prefer it so; I do not think that I could bear a German officialdom, and should probably have to leave *sponte meo*, which is only less picturesque and more expensive.

8th.

Mail day. All well, not yet put in prison, whatever may be in store for me. No time even to sign this lame letter. 1892 Nov.

XXIV

Dec. 1st.

1892 Dec. MY DEAR COLVIN, — Another grimy little odd and end of paper, for which you shall be this month repaid in kind, and serve you jolly well right. . . . The new house is roofed; it will be a braw house, and what is better, I have my yearly bill in, and I find I can pay for it. For all which mercies, etc. I must have made close on £4,000 this year all told; but what is not so pleasant, I seem to have come near to spending them. I have been in great alarm, with this new house on the cards, all summer, and came very near to taking in sail, but I live here so entirely on credit, that I determined to hang on.

Dec. 1st.

I was saying yesterday that my life was strange and did not think how well I spoke.

Yesterday evening I was briefed to defend a political prisoner before the Deputy Commissioner. What do you think of that for a vicissitude? 1892 Dec.

Dec. 3rd.

Now for a confession. When I heard you and Cassells had decided to print *The Bottle Imp* along with *Falesá*, I was too much disappointed to answer. *The Bottle Imp* was the *pièce de resistance* for my volume, *Island Nights' Entertainments.* However, that volume might have never got done; and I send you two others in case they should be in time.

First have the *Beach of Falesá.*

Then a fresh false title: ISLAND NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENTS; and then

The Bottle Imp: a cue from an old melodrama.

The Isle of Voices.

The Waif Woman: a cue from a *saga.*

Of course these two others are not up to the mark of *The Bottle Imp;* but they each have a certain merit, and they fit in style.

1892 Dec. By saying "a cue from an old melodrama" after the B. I., you can get rid of my note. If this is in time, it will be splendid, and will make quite a volume.

Should you and Cassells prefer, you can call the whole volume *I. N. E.* — though the *Beach of Falesá* is the child of a quite different inspiration. They all have a queer realism, even the most extravagant, even the *Isle of Voices;* the manners are exact.

Should they come too late, have them type-written, and return to me here the type-written copies.

Sunday, Dec. 4th.

3rd start, — But now more humbly and with the aid of an Amanuensis. First one word about page 2. My wife protests against the Waif-woman and I am instructed to report the same to you. [1] . . .

Dec. 5th.

A horrid alarm rises that our October mail was burned crossing the Plains. If

[1] This tale was withheld from the volume accordingly.

so, you lost a beautiful long letter — I am sure it was beautiful though I remember nothing about it — and I must say I think it serves you properly well. That I should continue writing to you at such length is simply a vicious habit for which I blush. At the same time, please communicate at once with Charles Baxter whether you have or have not received a letter posted here Oct. 12th, as he is going to cable me the fate of my mail. 1892 Dec.

Now to conclude my news. The German Firm have taken my book like angels, and the result is that Lloyd and I were down there at dinner on Saturday, where we partook of fifteen several dishes and eight distinct forms of intoxicating drink. To the credit of Germany, I must say there was not a shadow of a headache the next morning. I seem to have done as well as my neighbours, for I hear one of the clerks expressed the next morning a gratified surprise that Mr. Stevenson stood his drink so well. It is a strange thing that any

1892 Dec. race can still find joy in such atheletic exercises. I may remark in passing that the mail is due and you have had far more than you deserve.

R. L. S.

XXV

January, 1893.

1893 Jan. MY DEAR COLVIN, — You are properly paid at last, and it is like you will have but a shadow of a letter. I have been pretty thoroughly out of kilter, first a fever that would neither come on nor go off, then acute dyspepsia, in the weakening grasp of which I get wandering between the waking state and one of nightmare. Why the devil does no one send me *Atalanta?*[1] And why are there no proofs of D. Balfour? Sure I should have had the whole, at least the half, of them by now; and it would be all for the advantage of the Atalantans. I have written to Cassell & Co. (matter of *Falesá*) "you will please arrange with him" (meaning you). "What he may decide I shall abide."

[1] The magazine in which *Catriona* first appeared in this country, under the title *David Balfour*.

1893 Jan. So consider your hand free, and act for me without fear or favour. I am greatly pleased with the illustrations. It is very strange to a South-Seayer to see Hawaiian women dressed like Samoans, but I guess that 's all one to you in Middlesex. It 's about the same as if London city men were shown going to the Stock Exchange as *pifferari*, but no matter, none will sleep worse for it. I have accepted Cassell's proposal as an amendment to one of mine; that *D. B.* is to be brought out first under the title *Catriona* without pictures; and when the hour strikes, *Kidnapped* and *Catriona* are to form vols. I. and II. of the heavily illustrated "Adventures of David Balfour" at 7s. 6d. each, sold separately.

——'s letter was vastly sly and dry and shy. I am not afraid now. Two attempts have been made, both have failed, and I imagine these failures strengthen me. Above all this is true of the last, where my weak point was attempted. On every other, I am strong. Only force can dis-

lodge me, for public opinion is wholly on my side. All races and degrees are united in heart-felt opposition to the Men of Mulinuu. The news of the fighting was of no concern to mortal man; it was made much of because men love talk of battles, and because the Government pray God daily for some scandal not their own; but it was only a brisk episode in a clan fight which has grown apparently endemic in the west of Tutuila. At the best it was a twopenny affair, and never occupied my mind five minutes. 1893 Jan.

I am so weary of reports that are without foundation and threats that go without fulfilment, and so much occupied besides by the raging troubles of my own wame, that I have been very slack on politics, as I have been in literature. With incredible labour, I have rewritten the First Chapter of the Justice Clerk, it took me about ten days, and requires another athletic dressing after all. And that is my story for the month. The rest is grunting and grutching.

1893 Jan. Consideranda for *The Beach*: —

I. Whether to add one or both the tales I sent you?

II. Whether to call the whole volume "Island Nights' Entertainments"?

III. Whether, having waited so long, it would not be better to give me another mail, in case I could add another member to the volume and a little better justify the name?

If I possibly can draw up another story, I will. What annoyed me about the use of the *Bottle Imp*, was that I had always meant it for the centre-piece of a volume of *Märchen* which I was slowly to elaborate. You always had an idea that I depreciated the B. I.; I can't think wherefore; I always particularly liked it — one of my best works, and ill to equal; and that was why I loved to keep it in portfolio till I had time to grow up to some other fruit of the same *venue*. However, that is disposed of now, and we must just do the best we can.

I am not aware that there is anything to add, the weather is hellish, waterspouts, mists, chills, the foul fiend's own weather, following on a week of expurgated heaven; so it goes at this bewildering season. I write in the upper floor of my new house, of which I will send you some day a plan to measure. 'T is an elegant structure, surely, and the proid of me oi. Was asked to pay for it just now, and genteelly refused, and then agreed, in view of general good-will, to pay a half of what is still due. 1893 Jan.

24th January, 1893.

This ought to have gone last mail and was forgotten. My best excuse is that I was engaged in starting an influenza, to which class of exploit our household has been since then entirely dedicated. We had eight cases, one of them very bad, and one — mine — complicated with my old friend Bluidy Jack.[1] Luckily neither Fanny, Lloyd or Belle took the confounded

[1] Hemorrhage from the lungs.

1893 Jan. thing, and they were able to run the household and nurse the sick to admiration.

Some of our boys behaved like real trumps. Perhaps the prettiest performance was that of our excellent Henry Simelé, or, as we sometimes call him, Davy Balfour. Henry, I maun premeese, is a chief; the humblest Samoan recoils from emptying slops as you would from cheating at cards; now the last nights of our bad time when we had seven down together, it was enough to have made anybody laugh or cry to see Henry going the rounds with a slop-bucket and going inside the mosquito net of each of the sick, Protestant and Catholic alike, to pray with them.

I must tell you that in my sickness I had a huge alleviation and began a new story. This I am writing by dictation, and really think it is an art I can manage to acquire. The relief is beyond description; it is just like a school-treat to me and the Amanuensis bears up extraordinar'. The story is to be called *St. Ives*, I give you

your choice whether or not it should bear the sub-title, "Experiences of a French prisoner in England." We were just getting on splendidly with it, when this cursed mail arrived and requires to be attended to. It looks to me very like as if St. Ives would be ready before any of the others, but you know me and how impossible it is I should predict. The Amanuensis has her head quite turned and believes herself to be the author of this novel (and *is* to some extent) — and as the creature (!) has not been wholly useless in the matter (I told you so! A. M.), I propose to foster her vanity by a little commemoration gift! The name of the hero is Anne de St. Yves — he Englishes his name to St. Ives during his escape. It is my idea to get a ring made which shall either represent *Anne* or A. S. Y. A., of course, would be Amethyst and S. Sapphire, which is my favourite stone anyway and was my father's before me. But what would the ex-Slade professor do about the letter Y? 1893 Jan.

1893 Jan. Or suppose he took the other version how would he meet the case of the two N.'s? These things are beyond my knowledge, which it would perhaps be more descriptive to call ignorance. But I place the matter in the meanwhile under your consideration and beg to hear your views. I shall tell you on some other occasion and when the A. M. is out of hearing how *very* much I propose to invest in this testimonial; but I may as well inform you at once that I intend it to be cheap, sir, damned cheap! My idea of running amanuenses is by praise, not pudding, flattery and not coins! I shall send you when the time is ripe a ring to measure by.

To resume our sad tale. After the other seven were almost wholly recovered Henry lay down to influenza on his own account. He is but just better and it looks as though Fanny were about to bring up the rear. As for me, I am all right, though I *was* reduced to dictating *Anne* in the deaf and dumb alphabet, which I think you will admit is a *comble*.

Politics leave me extraordinary cold. It seems that so much of my purpose has come off, and Cedarcrantz and Pilsach are sacked. The rest of it has all gone to water. The triple-headed ass at home, in his plenitude of ignorance, prefers to collect the taxes and scatter the Mataafas by force or the threat of force. It may succeed, and I suppose it will. It is none the less for that expensive, harsh, unpopular and unsettling. I am young enough to have been annoyed, and altogether eject and renegate the whole idea of political affairs. Success in that field appears to be the organisation of failure enlivened with defamation of character; and, much as I love pickles and hot water (in your true phrase) I shall take my pickles in future from Crosse and Blackwell and my hot water with a dose of good Glenlivat. 1893 Jan.

Do not bother at all about the wall-papers. We have had the whole of our new house varnished, and it looks beautiful. I wish you could see the hall; poor

1893 Jan. room, it had to begin life as an infirmary during our recent visitation; but it is really a handsome comely place, and when we get the furniture, and the pictures, and what is so very much more decorative, the picture frames, will look sublime.

Jan. 30th.

I have written to Charles asking for Rowlandson's Syntax and Dance of Death out of our house, and begging for anything about fashions and manners (fashions particularly) for 1814. Can you help? Both the Justice Clerk and St. Ives fall in that fated year. Indeed I got into St. Ives while going over the Annual Register for the other. There is a kind of fancy list of Chaps. of St. Ives. (It begins in Edin^{b} Castle.) I. Story of a lion rampant (that was a toy he had made, and given to a girl visitor). II. Story of a pair of scissors. III. St. Ives receives a bundle of money. IV. St. Ives is shown a house. V. The Escape. VI. The Cottage (Swanston Col-

lege). VII. The Hen-house. VIII. Three is company and four none. IX. The Drovers. X. The Great North Road. XI. Burchell Fenn. XII. The covered cart. XIII. The doctor. XIV. The Luddites. XV. Set a thief to catch a thief. XVI. M. le Comte de Kéroualle (his uncle, the rich *émigré*, whom he finds murdered). XVII. The cousins. XVIII. Mr. Sergeant Garrow. XIX. A meeting at the Ship, Dover. XX. Diane. XXI. The Duke's Prejudices. XXII. The False Messenger. XXIII. The gardener's ladder. XXIV. The officers. XXV. Trouble with the Duke. XXVI. Fouquet again. XXVII. The Aeronaut. XXVIII. The True-Blooded Yankee. XXIX. In France. I don't know where to stop. Apropos, I want a book about Paris, and the *first return* of the *émigrés* and all up to the *Cent Jours:* d' ye ken anything in my way? I want in particular to know about them and the Napoleonic functionaries and officers, and to get the colour and some vital details of the business of exchange of

1893 Jan.

1893 Jan. departments from one side to the other.[1] Ten chapters are drafted, and VIII. recopied by me, but will want another dressing for luck. It is merely a story of adventure, rambling along; but that is perhaps the guard that "sets my genius best," as Alan might have said. I wish I could feel as easy about the other! But there, all novels are a heavy burthen while they are doing, and a sensible disappointment when they are done.

For God's sake, let me have a copy of the new German Samoa White book.

R. L. S.

[1] Vitrolle's *Mémories* and the "1814" and "1815" of M. Henri Houssaye were sent accordingly.

XXVI

At Sea, s.s. Mariposa,
Feb. 19th, '93.

1893
Feb.

My dear Colvin, — You will see from this heading that I am not dead yet nor likely to be. I was pretty considerably out of sorts, and that is indeed one reason why Fanny, Belle, and I have started out for a month's lark. To be quite exact, I think it will be about five weeks before we get home. We shall stay between two and three in Sydney. Already, though we only sailed yesterday, I am feeling as fit as a fiddle. Fanny ate a whole fowl for breakfast, to say nothing of a tower of hot cakes. Belle and I floored another hen betwixt the pair of us, and I shall be no sooner done with the present amanuensing racket than I shall put myself outside a pint of Guinness. If you think this looks like dying of consumption in Apia I can only say I

1893 Feb. differ from you. In the matter of David, I have never yet received my proofs at all, but shall certainly wait for your suggestions. Certainly, Chaps. 17 to 20 are the hitch, and I confess I hurried over them with both wings spread. This is doubtless what you complain of. Indeed, I placed my single reliance on Miss Grant. If she could n't ferry me over, I felt I had to stay there.

About *Island Nights' Entertainments* all you say is highly satisfactory. Go in and win.

The extracts from the *Times* I really cannot trust myself to comment upon. They were infernally satisfactory; so, and perhaps still more so, was a letter I had at the same time from Lord Pembroke. If I have time as I go through Auckland, I am going to see Sir George Grey.

Now I really think that 's all the business. I have been rather sick and have had two small hemorrhages, but the second I believe to have been accidental. No

good denying that this annoys, because it do. However, you must expect influenza to leave some harm, and my spirits, appetite, peace on earth and goodwill to men are all on a rising market. During the last week the Amanuensis was otherwise engaged, whereupon I took up, pitched into, and about one half demolished another tale, once intended to be called *The Pearl Fisher*, but now razeed and called *The Schooner Farralone*.[1] We had a capital start, the steamer coming in at sunrise, and just giving us time to get our letters ere she sailed again. The manager of the German Firm (Oh, strange, changed days!) danced attendance upon us all morning; his boat conveyed us to and from the steamer. 1893 Feb.

Feb. 21st.

All continues well. Amanuensis bowled over for a day, but afoot again and jolly; Fanny enormously bettered by the voyage; I have been as jolly as a sand-boy as usual

[1] Ultimately *The Ebb Tide*.

1893 Feb. at sea. The Amanuensis sits opposite to me writing to her offspring. Fanny is on deck. I have just supplied her with the Canadian Pacific Agent, and so left her in good hands. You should hear me at table with the Ulster purser and a little punning microscopist called Davis. Belle does some kind of abstruse Boswellising; after the first meal, having gauged the kind of jests that would pay here, I observed, "Boswell is Barred during this cruise."

23rd.

We approach Auckland and I must close my mail. All goes well with the trio. Both the ladies are hanging round a beau — the same — that I unearthed for them: I am general provider, and especially great in the beaux business. I corrected some proofs for Fanny yesterday afternoon, fell asleep over them in the saloon — and the whole ship seems to have been down beholding me. After I woke up, had a hot bath, a whiskey punch and a cigarette, and

went to bed, and to sleep too, at 8.30; a recrudescence of Vailima hours. Awoke to-day, and had to go to the saloon clock for the hour — no sign of dawn — all heaven grey rainy fog. Have just had breakfast, written up one letter, register and close this. 1893 Feb.

XXVII

Bad pen, bad ink,
bad light, bad
blotting-paper.

S. S. Mariposa, at Sea.
Apia due by daybreak to-
morrow, 9 p. m.

1893
Feb.

My dear Colvin, — Have had an amusing but tragic holiday, from which we return in disarray. Fanny quite sick, but I think slowly and steadily mending; Belle in a terrific state of dentistry troubles which now seem calmed; and myself with a succession of gentle colds out of which I at last succeeded in cooking up a fine pleurisy. By stopping and stewing in a perfectly airless state-room I seem to have got rid of the pleurisy. Poor Fanny had very little fun of her visit, having been most of the time on a diet of maltine and slops — and this while the rest of us were rioting on oysters and mushrooms. Belle's only devil in the hedge was the dentist. As for me, I was entertained at

the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, likewise at a sort of artistic club; made speeches at both, and may therefore be said to have been like Saint Paul, all things to all men. I have an account of the latter racket which I meant to have enclosed in this. . . . Had some splendid photos taken, likewise a medallion by a French sculptor; met Graham who returned with us as far as Auckland. Have seen a good deal too of Sir George Grey; what a wonderful old historic figure to be walking on your arm and recalling ancient events and instances! It makes a man small, and yet the extent to which he approved what I had done — or rather have tried to do — encouraged me. Sir George is an expert at least, he knows these races: he is not a small employé with an ink-pot and a Whittaker. 1893 Feb.

Take it for all in all, it was huge fun: even Fanny had some lively sport at the beginning; Belle and I all through. We got Fanny a dress on the sly, gaudy black

1893 Feb. velvet and Duchesse lace. And alas! she was only able to wear it once. But we 'll hope to see more of it at Samoa; it really is lovely. Both dames are royally outfitted in silk stockings, etc. We return, as from a raid, with our spoils and our wounded. I am now very dandy: I announced two years ago that I should change. Slovenly youth, all right — not slovenly age. So really now I am pretty spruce; always a white shirt, white necktie, fresh shave, silk socks, oh, a great sight! — No more possible, R. L. S.

XXVIII

April, 1893.

1. *Slip* 3.[1] Davie would be *attracted* into a similar dialect, as he is later — *e. g.*, with Doig, chapter XIX. This is truly Scottish. 1893 April

4, *to lightly;* correct; "to lightly" is a good regular Scots verb.

15. See Alan Ramsay's works.

15, 16. Ay, and that is one of the pigments with which I am trying to draw the character of Prestongrange. 'T is a most curious thing to render that kind, insignificant mask. To make anything precise is to risk my effect. And till the day he died, *Davie* was never sure of what P. was after. Not only so; very often P. did n't know himself. There was an element of

[1] These notes are in reply to a set of queries and suggestions as to points that seemed to need clearing in the tale of *Catriona*, as first published in *Atalanta*.

1893 April mere liking for Davie; there was an element of being determined, in case of accidents, to keep well with him. He hoped his Barbara would bring him to her feet, besides, and make him manageable. That was why he sent him to Hope Park with them. But Davie cannot *know;* I give you the inside of Davie, and my method condemns me to give only the outside both of Prestongrange and his policy.

-- I 'll give my mind to the technicalities. Yet to me they seem a part of the story, which is historical, after all.

-- I think they wanted Alan to escape. But when or where to say so? I will try.

-- 20, *Dean.* I 'll try and make that plainer.

Chap. XIII., I fear it has to go without blows. If I could get the pair — No, can't be.

-- XIV. All right, will abridge.

-- XV. I 'd have to put a note to every word; and he who can't read Scots can *never* enjoy Tod Lapraik.

-- XVII. Quite right. I *can* make this plainer, and will. 1893 April

-- XVIII. I know, but I have to hurry here; this is the broken back of my story; some business briefly transacted, I am leaping for Barbara's apron-strings.

Slip 57. Quite right again; I shall make it plain.

Chap. XX. I shall make all these points clear. About Lady Prestongrange (not *Lady* Grant, only *Miss* Grant, my dear, though *Lady* Prestongrange, quoth the dominie) I am taken with your idea of her death, and have a good mind to subsitute a featureless aunt.

Slip 78. I don't see how to lessen this effect. There is really not much said of it; and I know Catriona did it. But I 'll try.

-- 89. I know. This is an old puzzle of mine. You see C.'s dialect is not wholly a bed of roses. If only I knew the Gaelic. Well, I 'll try for another expression.

1893 April *The end.* I shall try to work it over. James was at Dunkirk ordering post-horses for his own retreat. Catriona did have her suspicions aroused by the letter, and, careless gentleman, I told you so — or she did at least. — Yes, the blood money. — I am bothered about the portmanteau; it is the presence of Catriona that bothers me; the rape of the pockmantie is historic. . . .

To me, I own, it seems in the proof a very pretty piece of workmanship. David himself I refuse to discuss; he *is*. The Lord Advocate I think a strong sketch of a very difficult character, James More, sufficient; and the two girls very pleasing creatures. But oh, dear me, I came near losing my heart to Barbara! I am not quite so constant as David, and even he — well, he did n't know it, anyway! *Tod Lapraik* is a piece of living Scots: if I had never writ anything but that and *Thrawn Janet*, still I 'd have been a writer. The defects of *D. B.* are inherent, I fear. But on the whole, I am far indeed from being displeased with

the tailie. They want more Alan? Well, they can't get it. 1893 April

I found my fame much grown on this return to civilisation. *Digito monstrari* is a new experience; people all looked at me in the streets in Sydney; and it was very queer. Here, of course, I am only the white chief in the Great House to the natives; and to the whites, either an ally or a foe. It is a much healthier state of matters. If I lived in an atmosphere of adulation, I should end by kicking against the pricks. Oh, my beautiful forest, oh, my beautiful, shining, windy house, what a joy it was to behold them again! No chance to take myself too seriously here.

The difficulty of the end is the mass of matter to be attended to, and the small time left to transact it in. I mean from Alan's danger of arrest. But I have just seen my way out, I do believe.

1893
April

Easter Sunday.

I have now got as far as slip 28, and finished the chapter of the law technicalities. Well, these seemed to me always of the essence of the story, which is the story of a *cause celèbre;* moreover, they are the justification of my inventions; if these men went so far (granting Davie sprung on them) would they not have gone so much further? But of course I knew they were a difficulty; determined to carry them through in a conversation; approached this (it seems) with cowardly anxiety; and filled it with gabble, sir, gabble. I have left all my facts, but have removed 42 lines. I should not wonder but what I 'll end by re-writing it. It is not the technicalities that shocked you, it was my bad art. It is very strange that x. should be so good a chapter and IX. and XI. so uncompromisingly bad. It looks as if XI. also would have to be re-formed. If x. had not cheered me up, I should be in doleful dumps, but x. is alive anyway, and life is all in all.

Thursday, April 5th. 1893 April

Well, there's no disguise possible; Fanny is not well, and we are miserably anxious. . . .

Friday, 7th.

I am thankful to say the new medicine relieved her at once. A crape has been removed from the day for all of us. To make things better, the morning is ah! such a morning as you have never seen; heaven upon earth for sweetness, freshness, depth upon depth of unimaginable colour, and a huge silence broken at this moment only by the far-away murmur of the Pacific and the rich piping of a single bird. You can't conceive what a relief this is; it seems a new world. She has such extraordinary recuperative power that I do hope for the best. I am as tired as man can be. This is a great trial to a family, and I thank God it seems as if ours was going to bear it well. And oh! if it only lets up, it will be but a pleasant memory. We are all seedy, bar Lloyd; Fanny, as per above;

1893 April self nearly extinct; Belle, utterly overworked and bad toothache; Cook, down with a bad foot; Butler, prostrate with a bad leg. Eh, what a faim'ly!

Sunday.

Grey heaven, raining torrents of rain; occasional thunder and lightning. Everything to dispirit; but my invalids are really on the mend. The rain roars like the sea; in the sound of it there is a strange and ominous suggestion of an approaching tramp; something nameless and measureless seems to draw near, and strikes me cold, and yet is welcome. I lie quiet in bed to-day, and think of the universe with a good deal of equanimity. I have, at this moment, but the one objection to it; the *fracas* with which it proceeds. I do not love noise; I am like my grandfather in that; and so many years in these still islands has ingrained the sentiment perhaps. Here are no trains, only men pacing barefoot. No carts or carriages; at worst

the rattle of a horse's shoes among the rocks. Beautiful silence; and so soon as this robustious rain takes off, I am to drink of it again by oceanfuls. 1893 April

April 16th.

Several pages of this letter destroyed as beneath scorn; the wailings of a crushed worm; matter in which neither you nor I can take stock. Fanny is distinctly better, I believe all right now; I too am mending, though I have suffered from crushed wormery, which is not good for the body, and damnation to the soul. I feel to-night a baseless anxiety to write a lovely poem *à propos des bottes de ma grandmère.* I see I am idiotic. I 'll try the poem.

17th.

The poem did not get beyond plovers and lovers. I am still, however, harassed by the unauthentic Muse; if I cared to encourage her — but I have not the time, and anyway we are at the vernal equinox. It is funny enough, but my pottering verses

1893 April

are usually made (like the God-gifted organ voice's) at the autumnal; and this seems to hold at the Antipodes. There is here some odd secret of Nature. I cannot speak of politics; we wait and wonder. It seems (this is partly a guess) Ide won't take the C. J. ship, unless the islands are disarmed; and that England hestitates and holds off. By my own idea, strongly corroborated by Sir George, I am writing no more letters. But I have put as many irons in against this folly of the disarming as I could manage. It did not reach my ears till nearly too late. What a risk to take! What an expense to incur! And for how poor a gain! Apart from the treachery of it. My dear fellow, politics is a vile and a bungling business. I used to think meanly of the plumber; but how he shines beside the politician!

Thursday.

A general, steady advance; Fanny really quite chipper and jolly — self on the rapid mend, and with my eye on *forests* that are

to fall — and my finger on the axe, which wants stoning. 1893 April

Saturday, 22

Still all for the best; but I am having a heart-breaking time over *David*. I have nearly all corrected. But have to consider *The Heather on Fire*, *The Wood by Silvermills*, and the last chapter. They all seem to me off colour; and I am not fit to better them yet. No proof has been sent of the title, contents, or dedication.

XXIX

25th April.

1893 April

My dear Colvin, — To-day early I sent down to Maben (Secretary of State) an offer to bring up people from Malie, keep them in my house, and bring them down day by day for so long as the negotiation should last.[1] I have a favourable answer so far. This I would not have tried, had not old Sir George Grey put me on my mettle; "Never despair," was his word; and "I am one of the few people who have lived long enough to see how true that is." Well, thereupon I plunged in; and the thing may do me great harm, but yet I do not think so — for I think jealousy will prevent the trial being made. And at any

[1] The outbreak of hostilities was at this date imminent between Mulinuu (the party of Laupepa, recognised and supported by the Three Powers), and Malie (the party of Mataafa).

rate it is another chance for this distracted archipelago of children, sat upon by a clique of fools. If, by the gift of God, I can do — I am allowed to try to do — and succeed: but no, the prospect is too bright to be entertained. 1893 April

To-day we had a ride down to Tanugamanono, and then by the new wood paths. One led us to a beautiful clearing, with four native houses; taro, yams, and the like, excellently planted, and old Folau — "the Samoan Jew" — sitting and whistling there in his new-found and well-deserved well-being. It was a good sight to see a Samoan thus before the world. Further up, on our way home, we saw the world clear, and the wide die of the shadow lying broad; we came but a little further, and found in the borders of the bush a Banyan. It must have been 150 feet in height; the trunk, and its acolytes, occupied a great space; above that, in the peaks of the branches, quite a forest of ferns and orchids were set; and over all again the

1893 April huge spread of the boughs rose against the bright west, and sent their shadow miles to the eastward. I have not often seen anything more satisfying than this vast vegetable.

Sunday.

A heavenly day again! the world all dead silence, save when, from far down below us in the woods, comes up the crepitation of the little wooden drum that beats to church. Scarce a leaf stirs; only now and again a great, cool gush of air that makes my papers fly, and is gone. — The King of Samoa has refused my intercession between him and Mataafa; and I do not deny this is a good riddance to me of a difficult business, in which I might very well have failed. What else is to be done for these silly folks?

May 12th.

May And this is where I had got to, before the mail arrives with, I must say, a real gentlemanly letter from yourself. Sir, that is the sort of letter I want! Now,

I 'll make my little proposal.[1] I will accept *Child's Play* and *Pan's Pipes*. Then I want *Pastoral*, *The Manse*, *The Islet*, leaving out if you like all the prefacial matter and beginning at I. Then the portrait of Robert Hunter, beginning "Whether he was originally big or little," and ending "fearless and gentle." So much for *Mem. and Portraits*. *Beggars*, sections I. and II., *Random Memories* II., and *Lantern Bearers;* I 'm agreeable. These are my selections. I don't know about *Pulvis et Umbra* either, but must leave that to you. But just what you please. 1893 May

About *Davie* I elaborately wrote last time, but still *Davie* is not done; I am grinding singly at *The Ebb Tide*, as we now call the *Farallone;* the most of it will go this mail. About the following, let there be no mistake: I will not write the

[1] For a volume of selected *Essays*, containing the pick of *Virginibus Puerisque*, *Memories and Portraits*, and *Across the Plains*.

1893 May abstract of *Kidnapped;* write it who will, I will not. Boccaccio must have been a clever fellow to write both argument and story; I am not, *et je me recuse.*

We call it *The Ebb Tide: a Trio and Quartette;* but that secondary name you may strike out if it seems dull to you. The book, however, falls in two halves, when the fourth character appears. I am on p. 82 if you want to know, and expect to finish on I suppose 110 or so; but it goes slowly, as you may judge from the fact that this three weeks past, I have only struggled from p. 58 to p. 82: twenty-four pages, *et encore* sure to be re-written, in twenty-one days. This is no prize-taker; not much Waverley Novels about this!

May 16th.

I believe it will be ten chapters of *The Ebb Tide* that go to you; the whole thing should be completed in I fancy twelve; and the end will follow punctually next mail. It is my great wish that this

might get into *The Illustrated London News* for Gordon Browne to illustrate. For whom, in case he should get the job, I give you a few notes. A purao is a tree giving something like a fig with flowers. He will find some photographs of an old marine curiosity shop in my collection, which may help him. Attwater's settlement is to be entirely overshadowed everywhere by tall palms; see photographs of Fakarava: the verandahs of the house are 12 ft. wide. Don't let him forget the Figure Head, for which I have a great use in the last chapter. It stands just clear of the palms on the crest of the beach at the head of the pier; the flag-staff not far off; the pier he will understand is perhaps three feet above high water, not more at any price. The sailors of the *Farallone* are to be dressed like white sailors of course. For other things, I remit this excellent artist to my photographs. 1893 May

I can't think what to say about the tale, but it seems to me to go off with a con-

1893 May siderable bang; in fact, to be an extraordinary work: but whether popular! Attwater is a no end of a courageous attempt, I think you will admit; how far successful is another affair. If my island ain't a thing of beauty, I'll be damned. Please observe Wiseman and Wishart; for incidental grimness, they strike me as in it. Also, kindly observe the Captain and *Adar;* I think that knocks spots. In short, as you see, I'm a trifle vainglorious. But oh, it has been such a grind! The devil himself would allow a man to brag a little after such a crucifixion! And indeed I'm only bragging for a change before I return to the darned thing lying waiting for me on p. 88, where I last broke down. I break down at every paragraph, I may observe; and lie here and sweat, till I can get one sentence wrung out after another. Strange doom; after having worked so easily for so long! Did ever anybody see such a story of four characters?

Later, 2.30. 1893 May

It may interest you to know that I am entirely *tapu*, and live apart in my chambers like a caged beast. Lloyd has a bad cold, and Graham and Belle are getting it. Accordingly, I dwell here without the light of any human countenance or voice, and strap away at *The Ebb Tide* until (as now) I can no more. Fanny can still come, but is gone to glory now, or to her garden. Page 88 is done, and must be done over again to-morrow, and I confess myself exhausted. Pity a man who can't work on along when he has nothing else on earth to do! But I have ordered Jack, and am going for a ride in the bush presently to refresh the machine; then back to a lonely dinner and durance vile. I acquiesce in this hand of fate; for I think another cold just now would just about do for me. I have scarce yet recovered the two last.

May 18th.

My progress is crabwise, and I fear only IX. chapters will be ready for the mail. I

1893 May am on p. 88 again, and with half an idea of going back again to 85. We shall see when we come to read: I used to regard reading as a pleasure in my old light days. All the house are down with the influenza in a body, except Fanny and me. The influenza appears to become endemic here, but it has always been a scourge in the islands. Witness the beginning of *The Ebb Tide*, which was observed long before the Iffle had distinguished himself at home by such Napoleonic conquests. I am now of course "quite a recluse," and it is very stale, and there is no amanuensis to carry me over my mail, to which I shall have to devote many hours that would have been more usefully devoted to *The Ebb Tide*. For you know you can dictate at all hours of the day and at any odd moment; but to sit down and write with your red right hand is a very different matter.

May 20th.

Well, I believe I 've about finished the thing, I mean as far as the mail is to take

it. Chapter x. is now in Lloyd's hands for remarks, and extends in its present form to p. 93 incl. On the 12th of May, I see by looking back, I was on p. 82, not for the first time; so that I have made 11 pages in nine livelong days. Well! up a high hill he heaved a huge round stone. But this Flaubert business must be resisted in the premises. Or is it the result of influenza? God forbid. Fanny is down now, and the last link that bound me to my fellow men is severed. I sit up here, and write, and read Renan's *Origines*, which is certainly devilish interesting; I read his Nero yesterday, it is very good, oh, very good! But he is quite a Michelet; the general views, and such a piece of character painting, excellent; but his method sheer lunacy. You can see him take up the block which he had just rejected, and make of it the corner-stone: a maddening way to deal with authorities; and the result so little like history that one almost blames oneself for wasting time. 1893 May

1893 May But the time is not wasted; the conspectus is always good, and the blur that remains on the mind is probably just enough. I have been enchanted with the unveiling of Revelations. And how picturesque that return of the false Nero! The Apostle John is rather discredited. And to think how one had read the thing so often, and never understood the attacks upon St. Paul! I remember when I was a child, and we came to the Four Beasts that were all over eyes, the sickening terror with which I was filled. If that was Heaven, what, in the name of Davy Jones and the aboriginal night-mare, could Hell be? Take it for all in all, *L'Antéchrist* is worth reading. The *Histoire d'Israël* did not surprise me much; I had read those Hebrew sources with more intelligence than the New Testament, and was quite prepared to admire Ahab and Jezebel, etc. Indeed, Ahab has always been rather a hero of mine; I mean since the years of discretion.

May 21st.

And here I am back again on p. 85! the last chapter demanding an entire revision, which accordingly it is to get. And where my mail is to come in, God knows! This forced, violent, alembicated style is most abhorrent to me; it can't be helped; the note was struck years ago on the *Janet Nicoll*, and has to be maintained somehow; and I can only hope the intrinsic horror and pathos, and a kind of fierce glow of colour there is to it, and the surely remarkable wealth of striking incident, may guide our little shallop into port. If Gordon Browne is to get it, he should see the Brassey photographs of Papeete. But mind, the three waifs were never in the town; only on the beach and in the calaboose. By George, but it 's a good thing to illustrate for a man like that! Fanny is all right again. False alarm! I was down yesterday afternoon at Paupata, and heard much growling of war, and the delightful news that the C. J. and the President are

1893 May

1893 May going to run away from Mulinuu and take refuge in the Tivoli hotel.

23rd. Mail day.

And lots of pleasures before me, no doubt! Among others the attempt to extract an answer from —— before mail time, which may succeed or may not.

The Ebb Tide, all but (I take it) fifteen pages, is now in your hands — possibly only about eleven pp. It is hard to say. But there it is, and you can do your best with it. Personally, I believe I would in this case make even a sacrifice to get Gordon Browne and copious illustration. I guess in ten days I shall have finished with it; then I go next to D. Balfour, and get the proofs ready: a nasty job for me, as you know. And then? Well, perhaps I 'll take a go at the family history. I think that will be wise, as I am so much off work. And then, I suppose, *Weir of Hermiston*, but it may be anything. I am discontented with *The Ebb Tide*, naturally;

there seems such a veil of words over it; 1893 May
and I like more and more naked writing;
and yet sometimes one has a longing for
full colour and there comes the veil again.
The Young Chevalier is in very full colour,
and I fear it for that reason. — Ever,

R. L. S.

XXX

29th May.

1893 May — My dear Colvin — Still grinding at Chap. xi. I began many days ago on p. 93, and am still on p. 93, which is exhilarating, but the thing takes shape all the same and should make a pretty lively chapter for an end of it. For xii. is only a footnote *ad explicandum.*

June the 1st.

June — Back on p. 93. I was on 100 yesterday, but read it over and condemned it.

10 *a.m.*

I have worked up again to 97, but how? The deuce fly away with literature, for the basest sport in creation. But it 's got to come straight! and if possible, so that I may finish *D. Balfour* in time for the same mail. What a getting upstairs! This is Flaubert outdone. Belle, Graham, and

Lloyd leave to-day on a malaga down the coast; to be absent a week or so: this leaves Fanny, me, and —— who seems a nice, kindly fellow. 1893 June

June 2nd.

I am nearly dead with dyspepsia, over-smoking, and unremunerative overwork. Last night, I went to bed by seven; woke up again about ten for a minute to find myself light-headed and altogether off my legs; went to sleep again, and woke this morning fairly fit. I have crippled on to p. 101, but I have n't read it yet, so do not boast. What kills me is the frame of mind of one of the characters; I cannot get it through. Of course that does not interfere with my total inability to write; so that yesterday I was a living half-hour upon a single clause and have a gallery of variants that would surprise you. And this sort of trouble (which I cannot avoid) unfortunately produces nothing when done but alembication and the far-fetched. Well, read it with mercy!

8 a.m.

1893 June Going to bed. Have read it, and believe the chapter practically done at last. But lord! it has been a business.

June 3rd, 8.15.

The draft is finished, the end of Chapter XII. and the tale, and I have only eight pages *wiederzuarbeiten*. This is just a cry of joy in passing.

10.30.

Knocked out of time. Did 101 and 102. Alas, no more to-day, as I have to go down town to a meeting. Just as well though, as my thumb is about done up.

Sunday, June 4th.

Now for a little snippet of my life. Yesterday, 12.30, in a heavenly day of sun and trade, I mounted my horse and set off. A boy opens my gate for me. "Sleep and long life! A blessing on your journey," says he. And I reply "Sleep, long life! A blessing on the house!" Then on, down the lime lane, a rugged, narrow, winding

way, that seems almost as if it was leading you into Lyonesse, and you might see the head and shoulders of a giant looking in. At the corner of the road I meet the inspector of taxes, and hold a diplomatic interview with him; he wants me to pay taxes on the new house; I am informed I should not till next year; and we part, *re infecta*, he promising to bring me decisions, I assuring him that, if I find any favouritism, he will find me the most recalcitrant taxpayer on the island. Then I have a talk with an old servant by the wayside. A little further I pass two children coming up. "Love!" say I; "are you two chiefly-proceeding inland?" and they say, "Love! yes!" and the interesting ceremony is finished. Down to the post office, where I find Vitrolles and (Heaven reward you!) the White Book, just arrived per *Upolu*, having gone the wrong way round, by Australia; also six copies of *Island Nights' Entertainments*. Some of Weatherall's illustrations are very clever; but O Lord! 1893 June

1893 June

the lagoon! I did say it was "shallow," but, oh, dear, not so shallow as that a man could stand up in it! I had still an hour to wait for my meeting, so Postmaster Davis let me sit down in his room and I had a bottle of beer in, and read *A Gentleman of France*. Have you seen it coming out in *Longman's?* My dear Colvin! 't is the most exquisite pleasure; a real chivalrous yarn, like the Dumas' and yet unlike. Thereafter to the meeting of the five newspaper proprietors. Business transacted, I have to gallop home and find the boys waiting to be paid at the doorstep.

Monday, 5th.

Yesterday, Sunday, the Rev. Dr. Browne, secretary to the Wesleyan Mission, and the man who made the war in the Western Islands and was tried for his life in Fiji, came up, and we had a long, important talk about Samoa. Oh, if I could only talk to the home men! But what would it matter? none of them know, none of them care. If

we could only have Macgregor here with his schooner, you would hear of no more troubles in Samoa. That is what we want; a man that knows and likes the natives, *qui paye de sa personne*, and is not afraid of hanging when necessary. We don't want bland Swedish humbugs, and fussy, footering German barons. That way the maelstrom lies, and we shall soon be in it. 1893 June

I have to-day written 103 and 104, all perfectly wrong, and shall have to rewrite them. This tale is devilish, and Chapter XI. the worst of the lot. The truth is of course that I am wholly worked out; but it 's nearly done, and shall go somehow according to promise. I go against all my gods, and say it is *not worth while* to massacre yourself over the last few pages of a rancid yarn, that the reviewers will quite justly tear to bits. As for D. B., no hope, I fear, this mail, but we 'll see what the afternoon does for me.

4-15

1893 June Well, it 's done. Those tragic 16 pp. are at last finished, and I have put away thirty-two pages of chips, and have spent thirteen days about as nearly in Hell as a man could expect to live through. It 's done, and of course it ain't worth while, and who cares? There it is, and about as grim a tale as was ever written, and as grimy, and as hateful.

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY
OF
J. L. HUISH,
BORN 1856, AT HACKNEY,
LONDON,
Accidentally killed upon this
Island,
10th September, 1889.

Tuesday, 6.

I am exulting to do nothing. It pours with rain from the westward, very unusual kind of weather; I was standing out on the

1893 June

little verandah in front of my room this morning, and there went through me or over me a wave of extraordinary and apparently baseless emotion. I literally staggered. And then the explanation came, and I knew I had found a frame of mind and body that belonged to Scotland, and particularly to the neighbourhood of Callander. Very odd these identities of sensation, and the world of connotations implied; highland huts, and peat smoke, and the brown, swirling rivers, and wet clothes, and whiskey, and the romance of the past, and that indescribable bite of the whole thing at a man's heart, which is — or rather lies at the bottom of — a story.

I don't know if you are a Barbey d'Aurévilly-an. I am. I have a great delight in his Norman stories. Do you know the *Chevalier des Touches* and *L'Ensorcelée?* They are admirable, they reek of the soil and the past. But I was rather thinking just now of *Le Rideau Cramoisi*, and its adorable setting of the

1893 June stopped coach, the dark street, the home-going in the inn yard, and the red blind illuminated. Without doubt, *there* was an identity of sensation; one of those conjunctions in life that had filled Barbey full to the brim, and permanently bent his memory.

I wonder exceedingly if I have done anything at all good; and who can tell me? and why should I wish to know? In so little a while, I, and the English language, and the bones of my descendants, will have ceased to be a memory! And yet — and yet — one would like to leave an image for a few years upon men's minds — for fun. This is a very dark frame of mind, consequent on overwork and the conclusion of the excruciating *Ebb Tide.* Adieu.

What do you suppose should be done with *The Ebb Tide?* It would make a volume of 200 pp.; on the other hand, I might likely have some more stories soon: *The Owl, Death in the Pot, The Sleeper Awakened;* all these are possible. *The*

Owl might be half as long; *The Sleeper Awakened,* ditto; *Death in the Pot* a deal shorter, I believe. Then there 's the *Go-Between,* which is not impossible altogether. *The Owl, The Sleeper Awakened,* and the *Go-Between* end reasonably well; *Death in the Pot* is an ungodly massacre. Oh, well, *The Owl* only ends well in so far as some lovers come together, and nobody is killed at the moment, but you know they are all doomed, they are Chouan fellows.[1] 1893 June

Friday 9th.

Well, the mail is in; no Blue-book, depressing letter from C.; a long, amusing ramble from my mother; vast masses of Romeïké; they *are* going to war now; and what will that lead to? and what has driven them to it but the persistent misconduct of these two officials? I know I ought to rewrite the end of this bluidy *Ebb*

[1] *The Owl* was to be a Breton story of the Revolution; *Death in the Pot,* a tale of the Sta. Lucia mountains in California; the scene of *The Go-Between* was laid in the Pacific Islands; of *The Sleeper Awakened,* I know nothing.

1893 June *Tide:* well, I can't. *C'est plus fort que moi;* it has to go the way it is, and be jowned to it! From what I make out of the reviews,[1] I think it would be better not to republish *The Ebb Tide:* but keep it for other tales, if they should turn up. Very amusing how the reviews pick out one story and damn the rest! and it is always a different one. Be sure you send me the article from *Le Temps.*

Saturday, 17th.

Since I wrote this last, I have written a whole chapter of my grandfather, and read it to-night; it was on the whole much appreciated, and I kind of hope it ain't bad myself. 'T is a third writing, but it wants a fourth. By next mail, I believe I might send you 3 chapters. That is to say *Family Annals, The Service of the Northern Lights,* and *The Building of the Bell Rock.* Possibly even 4 — *A Houseful of Boys.* I could finish my grandfather very easy now;

[1] Of *Island Nights' Entertainments.*

my father and Uncle Alan stop the way. 1893 June
I propose to call the book: *Northern Lights: Memoirs of a Family of Engineers.* I tell you, it is going to be a good book. My idea in sending MS. would be to get it set up; two proofs to me, one to Professor Swan, Ardchapel, Helensburgh — mark it private and confidential — one to yourself; and come on with criticisms! But I 'll have to see. The total plan of the book is this —

I. Domestic Annals.
II. The Service of the Northern Lights.
III. The Building of the Bell Rock.
IV. A Houseful of Boys (or, the Family in Baxter's Place).
V. Education of an Engineer.
VI. The Grandfather.
VII. Alan Stevenson.
VIII. Thomas Stevenson.

There will be an Introduction "The Surname of Stevenson" which has proved a mighty queer subject of inquiry. But, Lord! if I were among libraries.

Sunday, 15th.

1893 June

I shall put in this envelope the end of the ever-to-be-execrated *Ebb Tide*, or Stevenson's Blooming Error. Also, a paper apart for *David Balfour*. The slips must go in another enclosure, I suspect, owing to their beastly bulk. Anyway, there are two pieces of work off my mind, and though I could wish I had rewritten a little more of *David*, yet it was plainly to be seen it was impossible. All the points indicated by you have been brought out; but to rewrite the end, in my present state of over-exhaustion and fiction-phobia, would have been madness; and I let it go as it stood. My grandfather is good enough for me, these days. I do not work any less; on the whole, if anything, a little more. But it is different.

The slips go to you in four packets; I hope they are what they should be, but do not think so. I am at a pitch of discontent with fiction in all its form — or *my* forms — that prevents me being able to be

even interested. I have had to stop all drink; smoking I am trying to stop also. It annoys me dreadfully: and yet if I take a glass of claret, I have a headache the next day! Oh, and a good headache too; none of your trifles. 1893 June

Well, sir, here 's to you, and farewell. — Yours ever. R. L. S.

XXXI

Saturday, 24th (?) June.

1893 June

My dear Colvin, — Yesterday morning, after a day of absolute temperance, I awoke to the worst headache I had had yet. Accordingly, temperance was said farewell to, quinine instituted, and I believe my pains are soon to be over. We wait, with a kind of sighing impatience, for war to be declared, or to blow finally off, living in the meanwhile in a kind of children's hour of firelight and shadow and preposterous tales; the king seen at night galloping up our road upon unknown errands and covering his face as he passes our cook; Mataafa daily surrounded (when he awakes) with fresh "white man's boxes" (query, ammunition?) and professing to be quite ignorant of where they come from; marches of bodies of men across the island; concealment of ditto in the bush; the coming on and off

of different chiefs; and such a mass of ravelment and rag-tag as the devil himself could not unwind. 1893 June

Wednesday, 28th June.

Yesterday it rained with but little intermission, but I was jealous of news. Graham and I got into the saddle about 1 o'clock and off down to town. In town, there was nothing but rumours going; in the night drums had been beat, the men had run to arms on Mulinuu from as far as Vaiala, and the alarm proved false. There were no signs of any gathering in Apia proper, and the Secretary of State had no news to give. I believed him, too, for we are brither Scots. Then the temptation came upon me strong to go on to the and see the Mataafa villages, where we heard there was more afoot. Off we rode. When we came to Vaimusu, the houses were very full of men, but all seemingly unarmed. Immediately beyond is that river over which we passed in our scamper with Lady Jersey; it was all solitary. Three hundred

1893 June yards beyond is a second ford; and there — I came face to face with war. Under the trees on the further bank sat a picket of seven men with Winchesters; their faces bright, their eyes ardent. As we came up, they did not speak or move; only their eyes followed us. The horses drank, and we passed the ford. "Talofa!" I said, and the commandant of the picket said "Talofa;" and then, when we were almost by, remembered himself and asked where we were going. "To Faamuina," I said, and we rode on. Every house by the wayside was crowded with armed men. There was the European house of a Chinaman on the right-hand side: a flag of truce flying over the gate — indeed we saw three of these in what little way we penetrated into Mataafa's lines — all the foreigners trying to protect their goods; and the Chinaman's verandah overflowed with men and girls and Winchesters. By the way we met a party of about ten or a dozen marching with their guns and cartridge-belts, and

the cheerful alacrity and brightness of their looks set my head turning with envy and sympathy. Arrived at Vaiusu, the houses about the *malae* (village green) were thronged with men, all armed. On the outside of the council-house (which was all full within) there stood an orator; he had his back turned to his audience, and seemed to address the world at large; all the time we were there his strong voice continued unabated, and I heard snatches of political wisdom rising and falling. 1893 June.

The house of Faamuina stands on a knoll in the *malae*. Thither we mounted, a boy ran out and took our horses, and we went in. Faamuina was there himself, his wife Pelepa, three other chiefs, and some attendants; and here again was this exulting spectacle as of people on their marriage day. Faamuina (when I last saw him) was an elderly, limping gentleman, with much of the debility of age; it was a bright-eyed boy that greeted me; the lady was no less excited; all had cartridge-belts. We

1893 June stayed but a little while to smoke a sului; I would not have kava made, as I thought my escapade was already dangerous (perhaps even blameworthy) enough. On the way back, we were much greeted, and on coming to the ford, the commandant came and asked me if there were many on the other side. "Very many," said I; not that I knew, but I would not lead them on the ice. "That is well!" said he, and the little picket laughed aloud as we splashed into the river. We returned to Apia, through Apia, and out to windward as far as Vaiala, where the word went that the men of the Vaimauga had assembled. We met two boys carrying pigs, and saw six young men busy cooking in a cook-house; but no sign of an assembly; no arms, no blackened faces. I forgot! As we turned to leave Faamuina's, there ran forward a man with his face blackened, and the back of his lava-lava girded up so as to show his tattooed hips naked; he leaped before us, cut a wonderful caper, and flung his knife

high in the air, and caught it. It was strangely savage and fantastic and high-spirited. I have seen a child doing the same antics long before in a dance, so that it is plainly an *accepted solemnity*. I should say that for weeks the children have been playing with spears. Up by the plantation I took a short cut, which shall never be repeated, through grass and weeds over the horses' heads and among rolling stones; I thought we should have left a horse there, but fortune favoured us. So home, a little before six, in a dashing squall of rain, to a bowl of kava and dinner. But the impression on our minds was extraordinary; the sight of that picket at the ford, and those ardent, happy faces whirls in my head; the old aboriginal awoke in both of us and knickered like a stallion. 1893 June

It is dreadful to think that I must sit apart here and do nothing; I do not know if I can stand it out. But you see, I may be of use to these poor people, if I keep quiet, and if I threw myself in, I should

1893 June have a bad job of it to save myself. There; I have written this to you; and it is still but 7.30 in the day, and the sun only about one hour up; can I go back to my old grandpapa, and men sitting with Winchesters in my mind's eye? No; war is a huge *entraînement;* there is no other temptation to be compared to it, not one. We were all wet, we had been about five hours in the saddle, mostly riding hard; and we came home like schoolboys, with such a lightness of spirits, and I am sure such a brightness of eye, as you could have lit a candle at!

Thursday 29th.

I had two priests to luncheon yesterday: the Bishop and Père Rémy. They were very pleasant, and quite clean too, which has been known sometimes not to be — even with bishops. Monseigneur is not unimposing; with his white beard and his violet girdle he looks splendidly episcopal, and when our three waiting lads came up one after another and kneeled before him

in the big hall, and kissed his ring, it did me good for a piece of pageantry. Rémy is very engaging; he is a little, nervous, eager man, like a governess, and brimful of laughter and small jokes. So is the bishop indeed, and our luncheon party went off merrily — far more merrily than many a German spread, though with so much less liquor. One trait was delicious. With a complete ignorance of the Protestant that I would scarce have imagined, he related to us (as news) little stories from the gospels, and got the names all wrong! His comments were delicious, and to our ears a thought irreverent. "*Ah! il connaissait son monde, allez!*" "*Il était fin, notre Seigneur!*" etc. 1893 June

Friday.

Down with Fanny and Belle, to lunch at the International. Heard there about the huge folly of the hour, all the Mulinuu ammunition having been yesterday marched openly to vaults in Matafele; and this morning, on a cry of protest from the

1893 June whites, openly and humiliatingly disinterred and marched back again. People spoke of it with a kind of shrill note that did not quite satisfy me. They seemed not quite well at ease. Luncheon over, we rode out on the Malie road. All was quiet in Vaiusu, and when we got to the second ford, alas! there was no picket — which was just what Belle had come to sketch. On through quite empty roads; the houses deserted, never a gun to be seen; and at last a drum and a penny whistle playing in Vaiusu, and a cricket match on the *malae!* Went up to Faamuina's; he is a trifle uneasy, though he gives us kava. I cannot see what ails him, then it appears that he has an engagement with the Chief Justice at half-past two to sell a piece of land. Is this the reason why war has disappeared? We ride back, stopping to sketch here and there the fords, a flag of truce, etc. I ride on to Public Hall Committee and pass an hour with my committees very heavily. To the hotel to

dinner, then to the ball, and home by eleven, very tired. At the ball I heard some news, of how the chief of Letonu said that I was the source of all this trouble, and should be punished, and my family as well. This, and the rudeness of the man at the ford of the Gase-gase, looks but ill; I should have said that Faamuina, as he approached the first ford, was spoken to by a girl, and immediately said good-bye and plunged into the bush; the girl had told him there was a war party out from Mulinuu; and a little further on, as we stopped to sketch a flag of truce, the beating of drums and the sound of a bugle from that direction startled us. But we saw nothing, and I believe Mulinuu is (at least at present) incapable of any act of offence. One good job, these threats to my home and family take away all my childish temptation to go out and fight. Our force must be here, to protect ourselves. I see panic rising among the whites; I hear the shrill note of it in their

1893 June

1893 June voices, and they talk already about a refuge on the war ships. There are two here, both German; and the *Orlando* is expected presently.

Sunday, 9th July.

July Well, the war has at last begun. For four or five days, Apia has been filled by these poor children with their faces blacked, and the red handkerchief about their brows, that makes the Malietoa uniform, and the boats have been coming in from the windward, some of them 50 strong, with a drum and a bugle on board — the bugle always ill-played — and a sort of jester leaping and capering on the sparred nose of the boat, and the whole crew uttering from time to time a kind of menacing ululation. Friday they marched out to the bush; and yesterday morning we heard that some had returned to their houses for the night, as they found it "so uncomfortable." After dinner a messenger came up to me with a note, that the wounded were arriving at the Mission House. Fanny, Lloyd

and I saddled and rode off with a lantern; it was a fine starry night, though pretty cold. We left the lantern at Tanugamanono, and then down in the starlight. I found Apia, and myself, in a strange state of flusteration; my own excitement was gloomy and (I may say) truculent; others appeared imbecile; some sullen. The best place in the whole town was the hospital. A longish frame-house it was, with a big table in the middle for operations, and ten Samoans, each with an average of four sympathisers, stretched along the walls. Clarke was there, steady as a die; Miss Large, little spectacled angel, showed herself a real trump; the nice, clean, German orderlies in their white uniforms looked and meant business. (I hear a fine story of Miss Large — a cast-iron teetotaller — going to the public-house for a bottle of brandy.) 1893 July

The doctors were not there when I arrived; but presently it was observed that one of the men was going cold. He was

1893 July a magnificent Samoan, very dark, with a noble aquiline countenance, like an Arab, I suppose, and was surrounded by seven people, fondling his limbs as he lay: he was shot through both lungs. And an orderly was sent to the town for the (German naval) doctors, who were dining there. Meantime I found an errand of my own. Both Clarke and Miss Large expressed a wish to have the public hall, of which I am chairman, and I set off down town, and woke people out of their beds, and got a committee together, and (with a great deal of difficulty from one man, whom we finally overwhelmed) got the public hall for them. Bar the one man, the committee was splendid, and agreed in a moment to share the expense if the shareholders object. Back to the hospital about 11.30; found the German doctors there. Two men were going now, one that was shot in the bowels — he was dying rather hard, in a gloomy stupor of pain and laudanum, silent, with contorted

face. The chief, shot through the lungs, was lying on one side, awaiting the last angel; his family held his hands and legs; they were all speechless, only one woman suddenly clasped his knee, and "keened" for the inside of five seconds, and fell silent again. Went home, and to bed about two A. M. What actually passed seems undiscoverable; but the Mataafas were surely driven back out of Vaitele; that is a blow to them, and the resistance was far greater than had been anticipated — which is a blow to the Laupepas. All seems to indicate a long and bloody war. 1893 July

Frank's house in Mulinuu was likewise filled with wounded; many dead bodies were brought in; I hear with certainty of five, wrapped in mats; and a pastor goes to-morrow to the field to bring others. The Laupepas brought in eleven heads to Mulinuu, and to the great horror and consternation of the native mind, one proved to be a girl, and was identified as that of a Taupou — or Maid of the Village — from

1893 July Savaii. I hear this morning, with great relief, that it has been returned to Malie, wrapped in the most costly silk handkerchiefs, and with an apologetic embassy. This could easily happen. The girl was of course attending on her father with ammunition, and got shot; her hair was cut short to make her father's war head-dress — even as our own Sina's is at this moment; and the decollator was probably, in his red flurry of fight, wholly unconscious of her sex. I am sorry for him in the future; he must make up his mind to many bitter jests — perhaps to vengeance. But what an end to one chosen for her beauty and, in the time of peace, watched over by trusty crones and hunchbacks!

Evening.

Can I write or not? I played lawn tennis in the morning, and after lunch down with Graham to Apia. Ulu, he that was shot in the lungs, still lives; he that was shot in the bowels is gone to his fathers, poor, fierce child! I was able to

be of some very small help, and in the way of helping myself to information, to prove myself a mere gazer at meteors. But there seems no doubt the Mataafas for the time are scattered; the most of our friends are involved in this disaster, and Mataafa himself — who might have swept the islands a few months ago — for him to fall so poorly, doubles my regret. They say the Taupou had a gun and fired; probably an excuse manufactured *ex post facto.* I go down to-morrow at 12, to stay the afternoon, and help Miss Large. In the hospital to-day, when I first entered it, there were no attendants; only the wounded and their friends, all equally sleeping and their heads poised upon the wooden pillows. There is a pretty enough boy here, slightly wounded, whose fate is to be envied: two girls, and one of the most beautiful, with beaming eyes, tend him and sleep upon his pillow. In the other corner, another young man, very patient and brave, lies wholly deserted. Yet he seems to me far the

1893 July

1893 July better of the two; but not so pretty! Heavens, what a difference that makes; in our not very well proportioned bodies and our finely hideous faces, the 1-32nd — rather the 1-64th — this way or that! Sixteen heads in all at Mulinuu. I am so stiff I can scarce move without a howl.

Monday, 10th.

Some news that Mataafa is gone to Savaii by way of Manono; this may mean a great deal more warfaring, and no great issue. (When Sosimo came in this morning with my breakfast he had to lift me up. It is no joke to play lawn tennis after carrying your right arm in a sling so many years.) What a hard, unjust business this is! On the 28th, if Mataafa had moved, he could have still swept Mulinuu. He waited, and I fear he is now only the stick of a rocket.

Wednesday, 12th.

No more political news; but many rumours. The government troops are off to Manono; no word of Mataafa. Oh, there

is a passage in my mother's letter which puzzles me as to a date. Is it next Christmas you are coming? or the Christmas after? This is most important, and must be understood at once. If it is next Christmas, I could not go to Ceylon, for lack of gold, and you would have to adopt one of the following alternatives: 1st, either come straight on here and pass a month with us; 't is the rainy season, but we have often lovely weather. Or (2nd) come to Hawaii and I will meet you there. Hawaii is only a week's sail from S. Francisco, making only about sixteen days on the heaving ocean; and the steamers run once a fortnight, so that you could turn round; and you could thus pass a day or two in the States — a fortnight even — and still see me. But I have sworn to take no further excursions till I have money saved to pay for them; and to go to Ceylon and back would be torture unless I had a lot. You must answer this at once, please; so that I may know what to do. We would dearly

1893 July

1893 July like you to come on here. I 'll tell you how it can be done; I can come up and meet you at Hawaii, and if you had at all got over your sea-sickness, I could just come on board and we could return together to Samoa, and you could have a month of our life here, which I believe you could not help liking. Our horses are the devil, of course, miserable screws, and some of them a little vicious. I had a dreadful fright — the passage in my mother's letter is recrossed and I see it says the end of /94: so much the better, then; but I would like to submit to you my alternative plan. I could meet you at Hawaii, and reconduct you to Hawaii, so that we could have a full six weeks together and I believe a little over, and you would see this place of mine, and have a sniff of native life, native foods, native houses — and perhaps be in time to see the German flag raised, who knows? — and we could generally yarn for all we were worth. I should like you to see Vailima; and I should be curious to know

how the climate affected you. It is quite hit or miss; it suits me, it suits Graham, it suits all our family; others it does not suit at all. It is either gold or poison. I rise at six, the rest at seven; lunch is at 12; at five we go to lawn tennis till dinner at six; and to roost early. 1893 July

A man brought in a head to Mulinuu in great glory; they washed the black paint off, and behold! it was his brother. When I last heard he was sitting in his house, with the head upon his lap, and weeping. Barbarous war is an ugly business; but I believe the civilised is fully uglier; but Lord! what fun!

I should say we now have definite news that there are *three* women's heads; it was difficult to get it out of the natives who are all ashamed and the women all in terror of reprisals. Nothing has been done to punish or disgrace these hateful innovators. It was a false report that the head had been returned.

Thursday, 13th.

1893 July Mataafa driven away from Savaii. I cannot write about this, and do not know what should be the end of it.

Monday, 17th.

Haggard and Ahrens (a German clerk) to lunch yesterday. There is no real certain news yet: I must say, no man could *swear* to any result; but the sky looks horribly black for Mataafa and so many of our friends along with him. The thing has an abominable, a beastly, nightmare interest. But it 's wonderful generally how little one cares about the wounded; hospital sights, etc.; things that used to murder me. I was far more struck with the excellent way in which things were managed; as if it had been a peepshow; I held some of the things at an operation, and did not care a dump.

Tuesday, 18th.

Sunday came the Katoomba, Captain Bickford, C. M. G. Yesterday, Graham

and I went down to call, and find he has orders to suppress Mataafa at once, and has to go down to-day before daybreak to Manono. He is a very capable, energetic man; if he had only come ten days ago, all this would have gone by; but now the questions are thick and difficult. (1) Will Mataafa surrender? (2) Will his people allow themselves to be disarmed? (3) What will happen to them if they do? (4) What will any of them believe after former deceptions? The three consuls were scampering on horseback to Leulumoega to the King; no Cusack-Smith, without whose accession I could not send a letter to Mataafa. I rode up here, wrote my letter in the sweat of the concordance and with the able-bodied help of Lloyd — and dined. Then down in continual showers and pitchy darkness, and to Cusack-Smith's; not re-returned. Back to the inn for my horse, and to C.-S.'s, when I find him just returned and he accepts my letter. Thence home, by 12.30, jolly tired and wet. And

1893 July

1893 July to-day have been in a crispation of energy and ill-temper, raking my wretched mail together. It is a hateful business, waiting for the news; it may come to a fearful massacre yet. — Yours ever,

R. L. S.

XXXII

August, 1893.

1893 Aug.

My dear Colvin, — Quite impossible to write. Your letter is due to-day; a nasty, rainy-like morning with huge blue clouds, and a huge indigo shadow on the sea, and my lamp still burning at near 7. Let me humbly give you news. Fanny seems on the whole the most, or the only, powerful member of the family; for some days she has been the Flower of the Flock. Belle is begging for quinine. Lloyd and Graham have both been down with "belly belong him" (Black Boy speech). As for me, I have to lay aside my lawn tennis, having (as was to be expected) had a smart but eminently brief hemorrhage. I am also on the quinine flask. I have been re-casting the beginning of the *Hanging Judge* or *Weir of Hermiston;* then I have been cobbling on my grandfather, whose

1893 Aug. last chapter (there are only to be four) is in the form of pieces of paper, a huge welter of inconsequence, and that glimmer of faith (or hope) which one learns at this trade, that somehow and some time, by perpetual staring and glowering and rewriting, order will emerge. It is indeed a queer hope; there is one piece for instance that I want in — I cannot put it one place for a good reason — I cannot put it another for a better — and every time I look at it, I turn sick and put the MS. away.

Well, your letter hasn't come, and a number of others are missing. It looks as if a mail-bag had gone on, so I 'll blame nobody, and proceed to business.

It looks as if I was going to send you the first three chapters of my Grandfather. . . . If they were set up, it would be that much anxiety off my mind. I have a strange feeling of responsibility, as if I had my ancestors' *souls* in my charge, and might miscarry with them.

There 's a lot of work gone into it, and

a lot more is needed. Still Chapter I. seems about right to me, and much of Chapter II. Chapter III. I know nothing of, as I told you. And Chapter IV. is at present all ends and beginnings; but it can be pulled together. 1893 Aug.

This is all I have been able to screw up to you for this month, and I may add that it is not only more than you deserve, but just about more than I was equal to. I have been and am entirely useless; just able to tinker at my Grandfather. The three chapters — perhaps also a little of the fourth — will come home to you next mail by the hand of my cousin Graham Balfour, a very nice fellow whom I recommend to you warmly — and whom I think you will like. This will give you time to consider my various and distracted schemes.

All our wars are over in the meantime, to begin again as soon as the war-ships leave. Adieu. R. L. S.

XXXIII

23rd August.

1893 Aug. My dear Colvin, — Your pleasing letter *re The Ebb Tide*, to hand. I propose, if it be not too late, to delete Lloyd's name. He has nothing to do with the last half. The first we wrote together, as the beginning of a long yarn. The second is entirely mine; and I think it rather unfair on the young man to couple his name with so infamous a work. Above all, as you had not read the two last chapters, which seem to me the most ugly and cynical of all.[1]

You will see that I am not in a good humour; and I am not. It is not because of your letter, but because of the complicated miseries that surround me and that I choose to say nothing of. Life is not

[1] On a first reading of the incomplete MS. of *The Ebb Tide*, dislike of the three rascally heroes had made me unjust to the imaginative force and vividness of the treatment.

all Beer and Skittles. The inherent tragedy of things works itself out from white to black and blacker, and the poor things of a day look ruefully on. Does it shake my cast-iron faith? I cannot say it does. I believe in an ultimate decency of things; ay, and if I woke in hell, should still believe it! But it is hard walking, and I can see my own share in the missteps, and can bow my head to the result, like an old, stern, unhappy devil of a Norseman, as my ultimate character is. . . . 1893 Aug.

Well, *Il faut cultiver son jardin.* That last expression of poor, unhappy human wisdom I take to my heart and go to St. Ives.

24th Aug.

And did, and worked about 2 hours and got to sleep ultimately and "a' the clouds has blawn away." "Be sure we 'll have some pleisand weather, When a' the clouds (storms?) has blawn (gone?) away." Verses that have a quite inexplicable attraction for

1893 Aug. me, and I believe had for Burns. They have no merit, but are somehow good. I am now in a most excellent humour.

I am deep in *St. Ives* which, I believe, will be the next novel done. But it is to be clearly understood that I promise nothing, and may throw in your face the very last thing you expect — or I expect. *St. Ives* will (to my mind) not be wholly bad. It is written in rather a funny style; a little stilted and left-handed; the style of St. Ives; also, to some extent, the style of R. L. S. dictating. *St. Ives* is unintellectual, and except as an adventure novel, dull. But the adventures seem to me sound and pretty probable; and it is a love story. Speed his wings!

Sunday night.

De cœur un peu plus dispos, monsieur et cher confrère, je me remets à vous écrire. *St. Ives* is now in the 5th chapter copying; in the 14th chapter of the dictated draft. I do not believe I shall end by disliking it.

Monday.

Well, here goes again for the news. 1893 Aug.
Fanny is *very well* indeed, and in good spirits; I am in good spirits but not *very* well; Lloyd is in good spirits and very well; Belle has a real good fever which has put her pipe out wholly. Graham goes back this mail. He takes with him three chapters of *The Family*, and is to go to you as soon as he can. He cannot be much the master of his movements, but you grip him when you can and get all you can from him, as he has lived about six months with us and he can tell you just what is true and what is not — and not the dreams of dear old Ross.[1] He is a good fellow, is he not?

Since you rather revise your views of *The Ebb Tide*, I think Lloyd's name might stick, but I 'll leave it to you. I 'll tell

[1] Dr. Fairfax Ross, a distinguished physician of Sydney, and friend of the Stevenson family, who during a visit to England this summer had conveyed to me no very reassuring impression as to the healthfulness of the island life and climate.

1893 Aug. you just how it stands. Up to the discovery of the champagne, the tale was all planned between us and drafted by Lloyd; from that moment he has had nothing to do with it except talking it over. For we changed our plan, gave up the projected Monte Cristo, and cut it down for a short story. My jmpression — (I beg your pardon — this is a local joke — a firm here had on its beer labels, "sole jmporters") — is that it will never be popular, but might make a little *succès de scandale.* However, I 'm done with it now, and not sorry, and the crowd may rave and mumble its bones for what I care.

Hole essential.[1] I am sorry about the maps; but I want 'em for next edition, so see and have proofs sent. You are quite right about the bottle and the great Huish, I must try to make it clear. No, I will not write a play for Irving nor for the devil. Can you not see that the work of *falsifica-*

[1] W. Hole, R. S. A.: essential for the projected illustrations to *Kidnapped* and *Catriona.*

tion which a play demands is of all tasks the most ungrateful? And I have done it a long while — and nothing ever came of it. 1893 Aug.

Consider my new proposal, I mean Honolulu. You would get the Atlantic and the Rocky Mountains, would you not? for bracing. And so much less sea! And then you could actually see Vailima, which I *would* like you to, for it 's beautiful and my home and tomb that is to be; though it 's a wrench not to be planted in Scotland — that I can never deny — if I could only be buried in the hills, under the heather and a table tombstone like the martyrs, where the whaups and plovers are crying! Did you see a man who wrote the *Stickit Minister*,[1] and dedicated it to me, in words that brought the tears to my eyes every time I looked at them. "Where about the graves of the martyrs the whaups are crying. *His* heart remembers how." Ah, by God, it

[1] Mr. S. R. Crockett had been acquainted with R. L. S. as long ago as Bournemouth days, and had remained in friendly correspondence with him since.

1893 Aug. does! Singular that I should fulfil the Scots destiny throughout, and live a voluntary exile, and have my head filled with the blessed, beastly place all the time!

And now a word as regards the delusions of the dear Ross, who remembers, I believe, my letters and Fanny's when we were first installed, and were really hoeing a hard row. We have salad, beans, cabbages, tomatoes, asparagus, kohl-rabbi, oranges, limes, barbadines, pine-apples, Cape gooseberries — galore; pints of milk and cream; fresh meat five days a week. It is the rarest thing for any of us to touch a tin; and the gnashing of teeth when it has to be done is dreadful — for no one who has not lived on them for six months knows what the Hatred of the Tin is. As for exposure, my weakness is certainly the reverse; I am sometimes a month without leaving the verandah — for my sins, be it said! Doubtless, when I go about and, as the Doctor says, "expose myself to malaria," I am in far better health; and I would do so more too

— for I do not mean to be silly — but the difficulties are great. However, you see how much the dear Doctor knows of my diet and habits! Malaria practically does not exist in these islands; it is a negligeable quantity. What really bothers us a little is the mosquitto affair — the so-called elephantiasis — ask Ross about it. A real romance of natural history, *quoi!* 1893 Aug.

Hi! stop! you say *The Ebb Tide* is the "working out of an artistic problem of a kind." Well, I should just bet it was! You don't like Attwater. But look at my three rogues; they 're all there, I 'll go bail. Three types of the bad man, the weak man, and the strong man with a weakness, that are gone through and lived out.

Yes, of course I was sorry for Mataafa, but a good deal sorrier and angrier about the mismanagement of all the white officials. I cannot bear to write about that. Manono all destroyed, one house standing in Apolima, the women stripped, the prisoners beaten with whips — and the women's heads

1893 Aug. taken — all under white auspices. And for upshot and result of so much shame to the white powers — Tamasese already conspiring! as I knew and preached in vain must be the case! Well, well, it is no fun to meddle in politics!

I suppose you 're right about Simon.[1] But it is Symon throughout in that blessed little volume my father bought for me in Inverness in the year of grace '81, I believe — the trial of James Stewart, with the Jacobite pamphlet and the dying speech appended — out of which the whole of Davie has already been begotten, and which I felt it a kind of loyalty to follow. I really ought to have it bound in velvet and gold, if I had any gratitude! and the best of the lark is, that the name of David Balfour is not anywhere within the bounds of it. A pretty curious instance of the genesis of a book. I am delighted at your good word for *David;* I believe the two together

[1] Simon Fraser, the Master of Lovat, in *Catriona:* the spelling of his name.

make up much the best of my work and perhaps of what is in me. I am not ashamed of them, at least. There is one hitch; instead of three hours between the two parts, I fear there have passed three years over Davie's character; but do not tell anybody; see if they can find it out for themselves; and no doubt his experiences in *Kidnapped* would go far to form him. I would like a copy to go to G. Meredith. 1893 Aug.

Wednesday.

Well, here is a new move. It is likely I may start with Graham next week and go to Honolulu to meet the other steamer and return: I do believe a fortnight at sea would do me good; yet I am not yet certain. The crowded *up*-steamer sticks in my throat.

Tuesday, 12th Sept.

Yesterday was perhaps the brightest in the annals of Vailima. I got leave from Captain Bickford to have the band of the *Katoomba* come up, and they came, fourteen of 'em, with drum, fife, cymbals and bugles,

1893 Sept. blue jackets, white caps, and smiling faces. The house was all decorated with scented greenery above and below. We had not only our own nine out-door workers, but a contract party that we took on in charity to pay their war-fine; the band besides, as it came up the mountain, had collected a following of children by the way, and we had a picking of Samoan ladies to receive them. Chicken, ham, cake, and fruits were served out with coffee and lemonade, and all the afternoon we had rounds of claret negus flavoured with rum and limes. They played to us, they danced, they sang, they tumbled. Our boys came in the end of the verandah and gave *them* a dance for a while. It was anxious work getting this stopped once it had begun, but I knew the band was going on a programme. Finally they gave three cheers for Mr. and Mrs. Stevens, shook hands, formed up and marched off playing — till a kicking horse in the paddock put their pipes out something of the suddenest — we thought the big drum was

gone, but Simelé flew to the rescue. And so they wound away down the hill with ever another call of the bugle, leaving us extinct with fatigue, but perhaps the most contented hosts that ever watched the departure of successful guests. Simply impossible to tell how well these blue-jackets behaved; a most interesting lot of men; this education of boys for the navy is making a class, wholly apart — how shall I call them? — a kind of lower-class public school boy, well-mannered, fairly intelligent, sentimental as a sailor. What is more shall be writ on board ship if anywhere. 1893 Sept.

Please send *Catriona* to G. Meredith.

S. S. Mariposa.

To-morrow I reach Honolulu. Good-morning to your honour. R. L. S.

XXXIV

Waikiki, Honolulu, H. I.
Oct. 23rd, 1893.

1893 Oct. DEAR COLVIN, — My wife came up on the steamer and we go home together in 2 days.[1] I am practically all right, only sleepy and tired easily, slept yesterday from 11 to 11.45, from 1 to 2.50, went to bed at 8 P.M., and with an hour's interval slept till 6 A.M., close upon 14 hour's out of the 24. We sail to-morrow. I am anxious to get home, though this has been an interesting visit, and politics have been curious indeed to study. We go to P. P. C. on the "Queen" this morning; poor, recluse lady, *abreuvée d'injures qu'elle est.* Had a rather annoying lunch on board the American man-of-war, with a member of the P. G.

[1] In the interval between the last letter and this, the writer had been down with a sharp and prolonged attack of fever at Honolulu, and Mrs. Stevenson had come from Samoa to nurse and take him home.

(provincial government); and a good deal of anti-royalist talk, which I had to sit out — not only for my host's sake, but my fellow guests. At last, I took the lead and changed the conversation. R. L. S. 1893 Oct.

I am being busted here by party named Hutchinson.[1] Seems good.

[*Vailima — November.*]

Home again, and found all well, thank God. I am perfectly well again and ruddier than the cherry. Please note that 8000 is not bad for a volume of short stories;[2] the *Merry Men* did a good deal worse; the short story never sells. I hope *Catriona* will do; that is the important. The reviews seem mixed and perplexed, and one had the peculiar virtue to make me angry. I am in a fair way to expiscate my family history. Fanny and I had a lovely voyage down, with our new C. J. and the American Land Commissioner, and on the whole, and Nov.

[1] The bust exhibited in the New Gallery Summer Exhibition, 1895.

[2] *Island Nights' Entertainments.*

1893 Nov. for these disgusting steamers, a pleasant ship's company. I cannot understand why you don't take to the Hawaii scheme. Do you understand? You cross the Atlantic in six days, and go from 'Frisco to Honolulu in seven. Thirteen days at sea *in all.* — I have no wish to publish *The Ebb Tide* as a book, let it wait. It will look well in the portfolio. I would like a copy, of course, for that end; and to "look upon 't again" — which I scarce dare.

[*Later.*]

This is disgraceful. I have done nothing; neither work nor letters. On the Me (May) day, we had a great triumph; our Protestant boys, instead of going with their own villages and families, went of their own accord in the Vailima uniform; Belle made coats for them on purpose to complete the uniform, they having bought the stuff; and they were hailed as they marched in as the Tama-ona — the rich man's children. This is really a score; it means that Vailima is publicly taken as a family. Then we had

my birthday feast a week late, owing to diarrhœa on the proper occasion. The feast was laid in the Hall, and was a singular mass of food: 15 pigs, 100 lbs. beef, 100 lbs. pork, and the fruit and filigree in a proportion. We had sixty horse-posts driven in the gate paddock; how many guests I cannot guess, perhaps 150. They came between three and four and left about seven. Seumanu gave me one of his names; and when my name was called at the 'ava drinking, behold, it was *Au mai taua ma manu-vao!* You would scarce recognise me, if you heard me thus referred to! 1893 Nov.

Two days after, we hired a carriage in Apia, Fanny, Belle, Lloyd and I, and drove in great style, with a native outrider, to the prison; a huge gift of 'ava and tobacco under the seats. The prison is now under the *pule* of an Austrian, Captain Wurmbrand, a soldier of fortune in Servia and Turkey, a charming, clever, kindly creature, who is adored by "*his* chiefs" (as he calls them) meaning *our* political prisoners.

1893 Nov. And we came into the yard, walled about with tinned iron, and drank 'ava with the prisoners and the captain. It may amuse you to hear how it is proper to drink 'ava. When the cup is handed you, you reach your arm out somewhat behind you, and slowly pour a libation, saying with somewhat the manner of prayer, "*Ia taumafa e le atua. Ua matagofie le fésilafaiga nei.*" "Be it (high-chief) partaken of by the God. How (high-chief) beautiful to view is this (high-chief) gathering." This pagan practice is very queer. I should say that the prison 'ava was of that not very welcome form that we elegantly call spit-'ava, but of course there was no escape, and it had to be drunk. Fanny and I rode home, and I moralised by the way. Could we ever stand Europe again? did she appreciate that if we were in London, we should be *actually jostled* in the street? and there was nobody in the whole of Britain who knew how to take 'ava like a gentleman? 'T is funny to be thus of two civilisations — or, if you like,

of one civilisation and one barbarism. And, as usual, the barbarism is the more engaging. 1893 Nov.

Colvin, you have to come here and see us in our { native / mortal } spot. I just don't seem to be able to make up my mind to your not coming. By this time, you will have seen Graham, I hope, and he will be able to tell you something about us, and something reliable. I shall feel for the first time as if you knew a little about Samoa after that. Fanny seems to be in the right way now. I must say she is very, very well for her, and complains scarce at all. Yesterday, she went down *sola* (at least accompanied by a groom) to pay a visit; Belle, Lloyd and I went a walk up the mountain road —the great public highway of the island, where you have to go single file. The object was to show Belle that gaudy valley of the Vaisigano which the road follows. If the road is to be made and opened, as our new Chief Justice promises, it will be one of the most beautiful roads in the world.

1893 Nov. But the point is this; I forgot I had been three months in civilisation, wearing shoes and stockings, and I tell you I suffered on my soft feet; coming home, down hill, on that stairway of loose stones, I could have cried. Oh, yes, another story, I knew I had. The house boys had not been behaving well, so the other night I announced a *fono*, and Lloyd and I went into the boys' quarters, and I talked to them I suppose for half an hour, and Talolo translated; Lloyd was there principally to keep another ear on the interpreter; else there may be dreadful misconceptions. I rubbed all their ears, except two whom I particularly praised; and one man's wages I announced I had cut down by one half. Imagine his taking this smiling! Ever since, he has been specially attentive and greets me with a face of really heavenly brightness. This is another good sign of their really and fairly accepting me as a chief. When I first came here, if I had fined a man a sixpence, he would have quit work that hour, and now I remove half

his income, and he is glad to stay on — nay, does not seem to entertain the possibility of leaving. And this in the face of one particular difficulty — I mean our house in the bush, and no society, and no women society within decent reach. 1893 Nov.

I think I must give you our staff in a tabular form.

HOUSE.	KITCHEN.	OUTSIDE.
+ o *Sosimo*, provost and butler, and my valet.	+ o *Talolo*, provost and chief cook.	+ o *Henry Simelé*, provost and overseer of 4 outside boys.
o *Misifolo*, who is Fanny and Belle's chamberlain.	+ o *Iopu*, second cook.	*Lū.*
	Tali, his wife, no wages.	*Tasi Sele.*
	Ti'a, Samoan cook.	*Maiele.*
	Feiloa'i, his child, no wages, likewise no work — Belle's pet.	*Pulu*, who is also our talking-man and cries the 'ava.
	+ o *Leuelu*, Fanny's boy, gardner, odd jobs.	
	IN APIA.	
	+ *Eliga*, washman and daily errand man.	

1893 Nov. The crosses mark out the really excellent boys. Ti'a is the man who has just been fined ½ his wages; he is a beautiful old man, the living image of "Fighting Gladiator," my favourite statue — but a dreadful humbug. I think we keep him on a little on account of his looks. This sign o marks those who have been two years or upwards in the family. I note all my old boys have the cross of honour, except Misifolo; well, poor dog, he does his best, I suppose. You should see him scour. It is a remark that has often been made by visitors: you never see a Samoan run, except at Vailima. Do you not suppose that makes me proud?

I am pleased to see what a success *The Wrecker* was, having already in little more than a year outstripped *The Master of Ballantrae.*

About *David Balfour* in two volumes, do see that they make it a decent-looking book, and tell me, do you think a little historical appendix would be of service?

Lang bleats for one, and I thought I might address it to him as a kind of open letter. 1893 Nov.

Dec. 4th.

No time after all. Good-bye,

R. L. S.

XXXV

1893 Dec. My dear Colvin, — One page out of my picture book I must give you. Fine burning day; ½ past two p. m. We four begin to rouse up from reparatory slumbers, yawn, and groan, get a cup of tea, and miserably dress: we have had a party the day before, X'mas Day, with all the boys absent but one, and latterly two; we had cooked all day long, a cold dinner, and lo! at two our guests began to arrive, though dinner was not till six; they were sixteen, and fifteen slept the night and breakfasted. Conceive, then, how unwillingly we climb on our horses and start off in the hottest part of the afternoon to ride 4½ miles, attend a native feast in the gaol, and ride four and a half miles back. But there is no help for it. I am a sort of father of the political prisoners, and have *charge d'âmes* in that riotously

absurd establishment, Apia Gaol. The twenty-three (I think it is) chiefs act as under gaolers. The other day they told the Captain of an attempt to escape. One of the lesser political prisoners the other day effected a swift capture, while the Captain was trailing about with the warrant; the man came to see what was wanted; came, too, flanked by the former gaoler; my prisoner offers to shew him the dark cell, shoves him in, and locks the door. "Why do you do that?" cries the former gaoler. "A warrant," says he. Finally, the chiefs actually feed the soldiery who watch them! 1893 Dec.

The gaol is a wretched little building, containing a little room, and three cells, on each side of a central passage; it is surrounded by a fence of corrugated iron, and shews, over the top of that, only a gable end with the inscription *O le Fale Puipui.* It is on the edge of the mangrove swamp, and is reached by a sort of causeway of turf. When we drew near, we saw the gates stand-

1893 Dec. ing open and a prodigious crowd outside — I mean prodigious for Apia, perhaps a hundred and fifty people. The two sentries at the gate stood to arms passively, and there seemed to be a continuous circulation inside and out. The Captain came to meet us; our boy, who had been sent ahead, was there to take the horses; and we passed inside the court which was full of food, and rang continuously to the voice of the caller of gifts; I had to blush a little later when my own present came, and I heard my one pig and eight miserable pineapples being counted out like guineas. In the four corners of the yard and along one wall, there are make-shift, dwarfish, Samoan houses or huts, which have been run up since Captain Wurmbrand came to accommodate the chiefs. Before that they were all crammed into the six cells, and locked in for the night, some of them with dysentery. They are wretched constructions enough, but sanctified by the presence of chiefs. We heard a man corrected loudly

to-day for saying "*Fale*" of one of them; "*Maota*," roared the highest chief present — "palace." About eighteen chiefs, gorgeously arrayed, stood up to greet us, and led us into one of these *maotas*, where you may be sure we had to crouch, almost to kneel, to enter, and where a row of pretty girls occupied one side to make the 'ava (kava). The highest chief present was a magnificent man, as high chiefs usually are; I find I cannot describe him; his face is full of shrewdness and authority; his figure like Ajax; his name Auilua. He took the head of the building and put Belle on his right hand. Fanny was called first for the 'ava (kava). Our names were called in English style, the high-chief wife of Mr. St— (an unpronounceable something); Mrs. Straw, and the like. And when we went into the other house to eat, we found we were seated alternately with chiefs about the — table, I was about to say, but rather floor. Everything was to be done European style with a vengeance! We were the only

1893 Dec.

1893 Dec. whites present, except Wurmbrand, and still I had no suspicion of the truth. They began to take off their ulas (necklaces of scarlet seeds) and hang them about our necks; we politely resisted, and were told that the King (who had stopped off their *siva*) had sent down to the prison a message to the effect that he was to give a dinner to-morrow, and wished their second-hand ulas for it. Some of them were content; others not. There was a ring of anger in the boy's voice, as he told us we were to wear them past the King's house. Dinner over, I must say they are moderate eaters at a feast, we returned to the 'ava house; and then the curtain drew suddenly up upon the set scene. We took our seats, and Auilua began to give me a present, recapitulating each article as he gave it out, with some appropriate comment. He called me several times "their only friend," said they were all in slavery, had no money, and these things were all made by the hands of their families — nothing bought; he had one

phrase, in which I heard his voice rise up to a note of triumph: "This is a present from the poor prisoners to the rich man." Thirteen pieces of tapa, some of them surprisingly fine, one I think unique; thirty fans of every shape and colour; a kava cup, etc., etc. At first Auilua conducted the business with weighty gravity; but before the end of the thirty fans, his comments began to be humorous. When it came to a little basket, he said: "Here was a little basket for Tusitala to put sixpence in, when he could get hold of one" — with a delicious grimace. I answered as best I was able through a miserable interpreter; and all the while, as I went on, I heard the crier outside in the court calling my gift of food, which I perceived was to be Gargantuan. I had brought but three boys with me. It was plain that they were wholly overpowered. We proposed to send for our gifts on the morrow; but no, said the interpreter, that would never do; they must go away to-day, Mulinuu must see my porters

1893 Dec.

1893 Dec. taking away the gifts, — "make 'em jella," quoth the interpreter. And I began to see the reason of this really splendid gift; one half, gratitude to me — one half, a wipe at the King.

And now, to introduce darker colours, you must know this visit of mine to the gaol was just a little bit risky; we had several causes for anxiety; it *might* have been put up, to connect with a Tamasese rising. Tusitala and his family would be good hostages. On the other hand, there were the Mulinuu people all about. We could see the anxiety of Captain Wurmbrand, no less anxious to have us go, than he had been to see us come; he was deadly white and plainly had a bad headache, in the noisy scene. Presently, the noise grew uproarious; there was a rush at the gate — a rush *in*, not a rush *out* — where the two sentries still stood passive; Auilua leaped from his place (it was then that I got the name of Ajax for him) and the next moment we heard his voice roaring and saw his

mighty figure swaying to and fro in the hurly-burly. As the deuce would have it, we could not understand a word of what was going on. It might be nothing more than the ordinary "grab racket" with which a feast commonly concludes; it might be something worse. We made what arrangements we could for my tapa, fans, etc., as well as for my five pigs, my masses of fish, taro, etc., and with great dignity, and ourselves laden with ulas and other decorations, passed between the sentries among the howling mob to our horses. All's well that ends well. Owing to Fanny and Belle, we had to walk; and, as Lloyd said, "he had at last ridden in a circus." The whole length of Apia we paced our triumphal progress, past the King's palace, past the German firm at Sogi — you can follow it on the map — amidst admiring exclamations of "*Mawaia*" — beautiful — it may be rendered "Oh, my! ain't they dandy" — until we turned up at last into our road as the dusk deepened into night. 1893 Dec.

1893 Dec. It was really exciting. And there is one thing sure; no such feast was ever made for a single family, and no such present ever given to a single white man. It is something to have been the hero of it. And whatever other ingredients there were, undoubtedly gratitude was present. As money value I have actually gained on the transaction!

Your note arrived; little profit, I must say. Scott has already put his nose in, in *St. Ives*, sir; but his appearance is not yet complete; nothing is in that romance, except the story. I have to announce that I am off work, probably for six months. I must own that I have overworked bitterly — overworked — there, that's legible. My hand is a thing that was, and in the meanwhile so are my brains. And here in the very midst, comes a plausible scheme to make Vailima pay, which will perhaps let me into considerable expense just when I don't want it. You know the vast cynicism of my view of affairs, and how readily

and (as some people say) with how much gusto I take the darker view? 1893 Dec.

Why do you not send me Jerome K. Jerome's paper, and let me see *The Ebb Tide* as a serial? It is always very important to see a thing in different presentments. I want every number. Politically we begin the new year with every expectation of a bust in 2 or 3 days, a bust which may spell destruction to Samoa. I have written to Baxter about his proposal.[1]

[1] The scheme of the Edinburgh Edition.

XXXVI

Vailima,
Jan. 29th, 1894.

1894 Jan. MY DEAR COLVIN, — I had fully intended for your education and moral health to fob you off with the meanest possible letter this month, and unfortunately I find I will have to treat you to a good long account of matters here. I believe I have told you before about Tui-ma-le-alii-fano and my taking him down to introduce him to the Chief Justice. Well, Tui came back to Vailima one day in the blackest sort of spirits, saying the war was decided, that he also must join in the fight, and that there was no hope whatever of success. He must fight as a point of honour for his family and country; and in his case, even if he escaped on the field of battle, deportation was the least to be looked for. He said he had a letter of complaint from the

Great Council of A'ana which he wished to lay before the Chief Justice; and he asked me to accompany him as if I were his nurse. We went down about dinner time; and by the way received from a lurking native the famous letter in an official blue envelope gummed up to the edges. It proved to be a declaration of war quite formal but with some variations that really made you bounce. White residents were directly threatened, bidden to have nothing to do with the King's party, not to receive their goods in their houses, etc., under pain of an accident. However, the Chief Justice took it very wisely and mildly, and between us, he and I and Tui made up a plan which has proved successful — so far. The war is over — fifteen chiefs are this morning undergoing a curious double process of law, comparable to a court martial; in which their complaints are to be considered, and if possible righted, while their conduct is to be criticised, perhaps punished. Up to now, therefore, it has been a most success- 1894 Jan.

1894 Jan. ful policy; but the danger is before us. My own feeling would decidedly be that all would be spoiled by a single execution. The great hope after all lies in the knotless, rather flaccid character of the people. These are no Maoris. All the powers that Cedarcrantz let go by disuse the new C. J. is stealthily and boldly taking back again; perhaps some others also. He has shamed the chiefs in Mulinuu into a law against taking heads, with a punishment of six years' imprisonment, and for a chief degradation. To him has been left the sole conduct of this anxious and decisive inquiry. If the natives stand it, why, well! But I am nervous.

XXXVII

Feb. 1894.

DEAR COLVIN, — By a reaction, when your letter is a little decent, mine is to be naked and unashamed. We have been much exercised. No one can prophesy here, of course, and the balance still hangs trembling, but I *think* it will go for peace. 1894 Feb.

The mail was very late this time; hence the paltryness of this note. When it came and I had read it, I retired with *The Ebb Tide* and read it all before I slept. I did not dream it was near as good; I am afraid I think it excellent. A little indecision about Attwater, not much. It gives me great hope, as I see I *can* work in that constipated, mosaic manner, which is what I have to do just now with *Weir of Hermiston.*

We have given a ball; I send you a paper describing the event. We have two guests in the house, Captain-Count Wurm-

1894 Feb. brand and Monsieur Albert de Lautreppe. Lautreppe is awfully nice — a quiet, gentlemanly fellow, *gonflé de rêves*, as he describes himself — once a sculptor in the atelier of Henry Crosse, he knows something of art, and is really a resource to me.

Letter from Meredith very kind. Have you seen no more of Graham?

What about my grandfather? The family history will grow to be quite a chapter.

I suppose I am growing sensitive; perhaps, by living among barbarians, I expect more civilty. Look at this from the author of a very interesting and laudatory critique. He gives quite a false description of something of mine, and talks about my "insolence." Frankly, I supposed "insolence" to be a tapua word. I do not use it to a gentleman, I would not write it of a gentleman: I may be wrong, but I believe we did not write it of a gentleman in old days, and in my view he (clever fellow as he is) wants to be kicked for applying it to me. By writing a novel — even a bad one — I

do not make myself a criminal for anybody to insult. This may amuse you. But either there is a change in journalism, too gradual for you to remark it on the spot, or there is a change in me. I cannot bear these phrases; I long to resent them. My forbears, the tenant farmers of the Mains, would not have suffered such expressions unless it had been from Cauldwell, or Rowallan, or maybe Auchendrane. My Family Pride bristles. I am like the negro, "I just heard last night" who my great, great, great, great grandfather was.— Ever yours, 1894 Feb.

R. L. S.

XXXVIII

March, 1894.

1894 Mar. My dear Colvin, — This is the very day the mail goes, and I have as yet written you nothing. But it was just as well — as it was all about my "blacks and chocolates," and what of it had relation to whites you will read some of in the *Times*. It means, as you will see, that I have at one blow quarrelled with *all* the officials of Samoa, the Foreign Office, and I suppose her Majesty the Queen with milk and honey blest. But you'll see in the *Times*. I am very well indeed, but just about dead and mighty glad the mail is near here, and I can just give up all hope of contending with my letters, and lie down for the rest of the day. These *Times* letters are not easy to write. And I dare say the Consuls say, "Why, then, does he write them?"

I had miserable luck with *St. Ives;* being already half-way through it, a book I had ordered six months ago arrives at last, and I have to change the first half of it from top to bottom! How could I have dreamed the French prisoners were watched over like a female charity school, kept in a grotesque livery, and shaved twice a week? And I had made all my points on the idea that they were unshaved and clothed anyhow. However, this last is better business; if only the book had come when I ordered it! *À propos,* many of the books you announce don't come as a matter of fact. When they are of any value, it is best to register them. Your letter, alas! is not here; I sent it down to the cottage, with all my mail, for Fanny; on Sunday night a boy comes up with a lantern and a note from Fanny, to say the woods are full of Atuas[1] and I must bring a horse down that 1894 Mar.

[1] A fresh rising, this time of the partisans of Tamasese, belonging to the island of Atua, had taken place, and was, after some time, suppressed, with circumstances of damage

1894 Mar. instant, as the posts are established beyond her on the road, and she does not want to have the fight going on between us. Impossible to get a horse; so I started in the dark on foot, with a revolver, and my spurs on my bare feet, leaving directions that the boy should mount after me with the horse. Try such an experience on Our Road once, and do it, if you please, after you have been down town from nine o'clock till six, on board the ship-of-war lunching, teaching Sunday School (I actually do) and making necessary visits; and the Saturday before, having sat all day from ½ past six to ½ past four, scriving at my *Times* letter. About half-way up, just in fact at "point" of the outposts, I met Fanny coming up. Then all night long I was being wakened with scares that really should be looked into, though I *knew* there was nothing in them and no bottom to the whole story; and the

and suffering which Stevensen thought might have been avoided if the policy of the Three Powers had been wiser or more judiciously carried out.

drums and shouts and cries from Tanugamanono and the town keeping up an all night corybantic chorus in the moonlight — the moon rose late — and the searchlight of the war-ship in the harbour making a jewel of brightness as it lit up the bay of Apia in the distance. And then next morning, about eight o'clock, a drum coming out of the woods and a party of patrols who had been in the woods on our left front (which is our true rear) coming up to the house, and meeting there another party who had been in the woods on our right { front / rear } which is Vaea Mountain, and 43 of them being entertained to 'ava and biscuits on the verandah, and marching off at last in single file for Apia. Briefly, it is not much wonder if your letter and my whole mail was left at the cottage, and I have no means of seeing or answering particulars. 1894 Mar.

The whole thing was nothing but a bottomless scare; it was *obviously* so; you couldn't make a child believe it was any-

1894 Mar. thing else, but it has made the Consuls sit up. My own private scares were really abominably annoying; as for instance after I had got to sleep for the ninth time perhaps — and that was no easy matter either, for I had a crick in my neck so agonising that I had to sleep sitting up — I heard noises as of a man being murdered in the boys' house. To be sure, said I, this is nothing again, but if a man's head was being taken, the noises would be the same! So I had to get up, stifle my cries of agony from the crick, get my revolver, and creep out stealthily to the boys' house. And there were two of them sitting up, keeping watch of their own accord like good boys, and whiling the time over a game of Sweepi (Cascino — the whist of our islanders) — and one of them was our champion idiot, Misifolo, and I suppose he was holding bad cards, and losing all the time — and these noises were his humorous protests against Fortune!

Well, excuse this excursion into my

"blacks and chocolates." It is the last. You will have heard from Lysaght how I failed to write last mail. The said Lysaght seems to me a very nice fellow. We were only sorry he could not stay with us longer. Austin came back from school last week, which made a great time for the Amanuensis, you may be sure. Then on Saturday, the *Curaçoa* came in — same commission, with all our old friends; and on Sunday, as already mentioned, Austin and I went down to service and had lunch afterwards in the wardroom. The officers were awfully nice to Austin; they are the most amiable ship in the world; and after lunch we had a paper handed round on which we were to guess, and sign our guess, of the number of leaves on the pine-apple; I never saw this game before, but it seems it is much practised in the Queen's Navee. When all have betted, one of the party begins to strip the pineapple head, and the person whose guess is furthest out has to pay for the sherry. My equanimity

1894 Mar.

1894 Mar. was disturbed by shouts of *The American Commodore*, and I found that Austin had entered and lost about a bottle of sherry! He turned with great composure and addressed me. "I am afraid I must look to you, Uncle Louis." The Sunday School racket is only an experiment which I took up at the request of the late American Land Commissioner; I am trying it for a month, and if I do as ill as I believe, and the boys find it only half as tedious as I do, I think it will end in a month. I have *carte blanche*, and say what I like; but does any single soul understand me?

Fanny is on the whole very much better. Lloyd has been under the weather, and goes for a month to the South Island of New Zealand for some skating, save the mark! I get all the skating I want among officials.

Dear Colvin, please remember that my life passes among my "blacks or chocolates." If I were to do as you propose, in a bit of a tiff, it would cut you off entirely

from my life.[1] You must try to exercise a trifle of imagination, and put yourself, perhaps with an effort, into some sort of sympathy with these people, or how am I to write to you? I think you are truly a little too Cockney with me. — Ever yours, 1894 Mar.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

[1] In reply to a petition, not meant to be so seriously taken, that his letters should not be so entirely taken up as some of the past winter had been with native affairs, of relatively little meaning or interest to his correspondent.

XXXIX

Vailima, May 18th, 1894.

1894 May

MY DEAR COLVIN, — Your proposals for the Edinburgh edition are entirely to my mind. About the *Amateur Emigrant*, it shall go to you by this mail well slashed. If you like to slash some more on your own account, I give you permission. 'T is not a great work; but since it goes to make up the two first volumes as proposed, I presume it has not been written in vain.[1] — *Miscellanies.* I see with some alarm the proposal to print *Juvenilia*, does it not seem to you taking myself a little too much as Grandfather William? I am certainly not so young as I once was — a lady took occasion to remind me of the fact no later

[1] The suppressed first part of the *Amateur Emigrant*, written in San Francisco in 1879, which it was proposed now to condense and to some extent recast for the Edinburgh Edition.

agone than last night. "Why don't you leave that to the young men, Mr. Stevenson?" said she — but when I remember that I felt indignant at even John Ruskin when he did something of the kind I really feel myself blush from head to heel. If you want to make up the first volume, there are a good many works which I took the trouble to prepare for publication and which have never been republished. In addition to *Roads* and *Dancing Children*, referred to by you, there is an Autumn effect in the *Portfolio*, and a paper on *Fontainebleau — Forest Notes* is the name of it — in *Cornhill*. I have no objection to any of these being edited, say with a scythe, and reproduced. But I heartily abominate and reject the idea of reprinting the *Pentland Rising*. For God's sake let me get buried first. 1894 May

Tales and Fantasies. Vols. I. and II. have my hearty approval. But I think III. and IV. had better be crammed into one as you suggest. I will reprint none of the stories mentioned. They are below the mark.

1894 May Well, I dare say the beastly *Body-Snatcher* has merit, and I am unjust to it from my recollections of the *Pall Mall.* But the other two won't do. For vols. v. and VI., now changed into IV. and V., I propose the common title of *South Sea Yarns.* There! These are all my differences of opinion. I agree with every detail of your arrangement, and, as you see, my objections have turned principally on the question of hawking unripe fruit. I dare say it is all pretty green, but that is no reason for us to fill the barrow with trash. Think of having a new set of type cast, paper especially made, etc., in order to set up rubbish that is not fit for the *Saturday Scotsman.* It would be the climax of shame.

I am sending you a lot of verses, which had best, I think, be called *Underwoods* Book III., but in what order are they to go? Also, I am going on every day a little, till I get sick of it, with the attempt to get the *Emigrant* compressed into life; I know I can — or you can after me — do it. It is

only a question of time and prayer and ink, and should leave something, no, not good, but not all bad — a very genuine appreciation of these folks. You are to remember besides there is that paper of mine on Bunyan in *The Magazine of Art.* Oh, and then there 's another thing in *Seeley* called some spewsome name, I cannot recall it. 1894 May

Well — come, here goes for *Juvenilia. Dancing Infants, Roads, An Autumn Effect, Forest Notes* (but this should come at the end of them, as it 's really rather riper), the t'other thing from *Seeley*, and I 'll tell you, you may put in my letter to the Church of Scotland — it 's not written amiss, and I dare say the *Philosophy of Umbrellas* might go in, but there I stick — and remember *that* was a collaboration with James Walter Ferrier. Oh, and there was a little skit called the *Charity Bazaar*, which you might see; I don't think it would do. Now, I do not think there are two other words that should be printed. —

1894 May By the way, there is an article of mine called *The Day after To-morrow* in the *Contemporary* which you might find room for somewhere; it is no' bad.

Very busy with all these affairs and some native ones also.

XL

Vailima, June 18th, '94.

1894 June

My dear Colvin, — You are to please understand that my last letter is withdrawn unconditionally. You and Baxter are having all the trouble of this Edition, and I simply put myself in your hands for you to do what you like with me, and I am sure that will be the best, at any rate. Hence you are to conceive me withdrawing all objections to your printing anything you please. After all, it is a sort of family affair. About the Miscellany Section, both plans seem to me quite good. Toss up. I think the *Old Gardener* has to stay where I put him last. It would not do to separate John and Robert.

In short, I am only sorry I ever uttered a word about the edition, and leave you to be the judge. I have had a vile cold which has prostrated me for more than a fortnight,

1894 June and even now tears me nightly with spasmodic coughs; but it has been a great victory. I have never borne a cold with so little hurt; wait till the clouds blow by, before you begin to boast! I have had no fever; and though I 've been very unhappy, it is nigh over, I think. Of course, *St. Ives* has paid the penalty. I must not let you be disappointed in *St. I.* It is a mere tissue of adventures; the central figure not very well or very sharply drawn; no philosophy, no destiny, to it; some of the happenings very good in themselves, I believe, but none of them *bildende*, none of them constructive, except in so far perhaps as they make up a kind of sham picture of the time, all in italics and all out of drawing. Here and there, I think, it is well written; and here and there it 's not. Some of the episodic characters are amusing, I do believe; others not, I suppose. However, they are the best of the thing such as it is. If it has a merit to it, I should say it was a sort of deliberation and

swing to the style, which seems to me to suit the mail-coaches and post-chaises with which it sounds all through. 'T is my most prosaic book. 1894 June

I called on the two German ships now in port, and we are quite friendly with them, and intensely friendly of course with our own *Curaçoas*. But it is other guess work on the beach. Some one has employed, or subsidised, one of the local editors to attack me once a week. He is pretty scurrilous and pretty false. The first effect of the perusal of the weekly Beast is to make me angry; the second is a kind of deep, golden content and glory, when I seem to say to people: "See! this is my position — I am a plain man dwelling in the bush in a house, and behold they have to get up this kind of truck against me — and I have so much influence that they are obliged to write a weekly article to say I have none."

By this time you must have seen Lysaght and forgiven me the letter that came not at all. He was really so nice a fellow — he

1894 June had so much to tell me of Meredith — and the time was so short — that I gave up the intervening days between mails entirely to entertain him.

We go on pretty nicely. Fanny, Belle, and I have had two months alone, and it has been very pleasant. But by to-morrow or next day noon, we shall see the whole clan assembled again about Vailima table, which will be pleasant too; seven persons in all, and the Babel of voices will be heard again in the big hall so long empty and silent. Good-bye. Love to all. Time to close. — Yours, ever, R. L. S.

XLI

July, 1894.

1894 July

MY DEAR COLVIN, — I have to thank you this time for a very good letter, and will announce for the future, though I cannot now begin to put in practice, good intentions for our correspondence. I will try to return to the old system and write from time to time during the month; but truly you did not much encourage me to continue! However, that is all by-past. I do not know that there is much in your letter that calls for answer. Your questions about *St. Ives* were practically answered in my last; so were your wails about the edition, *Amateur Emigrant*, etc. By the end of the year *St. I.* will be practically finished, whatever it be worth, and that I know not. When shall I receive proofs of the *Magnum Opus?* or shall I receive them at all?

The return of the Amanuensis feebly lightens my heart. You can see the heavy

1894 July weather I was making of it with my unaided pen. The last month has been particularly cheery largely owing to the presence of our good friends the *Curaçoas*. She is really a model ship, charming officers and charming seamen. They gave a ball last month, which was very rackety and joyous and naval. . . .

On the following day, about one o'clock, three horsemen might have been observed approaching Vailima, who gradually resolved themselves into two petty officers and a native guide. Drawing himself up and saluting, the spokesman (a corporal of Marines) addressed me thus. "Me and my shipmates inwites Mr. and Mrs. Stevens, Mrs. Strong, Mr. Austin, and Mr. Balfour to a ball to be given to-night in the selfsame 'all." It was of course impossible to refuse, though I contented myself with putting in a very brief appearance. One glance was sufficient; the ball went off like a rocket from the start. I had only time to watch Belle careering around with a gallant blue-

jacket of exactly her own height — the standard of the British navy — an excellent dancer and conspicuously full of small-talk — and to hear a remark from a beach-comber, "It 's a nice sight this some way, to see the officers dancing like this with the men, but I tell you, sir, these are the men that 'll fight together!" 1894 July

I tell you, Colvin, the acquaintance of the men — and boys — make me feel patriotic. Eeles in particular is a man whom I respect. I am half in a mind to give him a letter of introduction to you when he goes home. In case you feel inclined to make a little of him, give him a dinner, ask Henry James to come to meet him, etc. — you might let me know. I don't know that he would show his best, but he is a remarkably fine fellow, in every department of life.

We have other visitors in port. A Count Festitics de Solna, an Austrian officer, a very pleasant, simple, boyish creature, with his young wife, daughter of

1894 July an American millionaire, he is a friend of our own Captain Wurmbrand, and it is a great pity Wurmbrand is away.

Glad you saw and liked Lysaght. He has left in our house a most cheerful and pleasing memory, as a good, pleasant, brisk fellow with good health and brains, and who enjoys himself and makes other people happy. I am glad he gave you a good report of our surroundings and way of life; but I knew he would, for I believe he had a glorious time — and gave one.[1]

[1] Mr. S. R. Lysaght, author of *The Marplot*, etc. I may be allowed to quote the following sentences from a letter of this gentleman written when the news of our friend's death reached England: — "So great was his power of winning love that though I knew him for less than a week I could have borne the loss of many a more intimate friend with less sorrow than Stevenson's. When I saw him, last Easter, there was no suggestion of failure of strength. After all I had heard of his delicacy I was astonished at his vigour. He was up at five, and at work soon after, and at eleven o'clock at night he was dancing on the floor of the big room while I played Scotch and Irish reels on the rickety piano. He would talk to me for hours of home and old friends, but with a wonderful cheerfulness, knowing himself banished from them for life and yet brought close to them by love. I confidently

I am on fair terms with the two Treaty officials, though all such intimacies are precarious; with the consuls, I need not say, my position is deplorable. The President (Herr Emil Schmidt) is a rather dreamy man, whom I like. Lloyd, Graham and I go to breakfast with him to-morrow, the next day the whole party of us lunch on the *Curaçoa* and go in the evening to a *Bierabend* at Dr. Funk's. We are getting up a paper-chase for the following week with some of the young German clerks, and have in view a sort of child's party for grown-up persons with kissing games, etc., here at Vailima. Such is the gay scene in which we move. Now I have done something, though not as much as I wanted, to give you an idea of how we are getting on, and I am keenly conscious that there are other letters to do before the mail goes. — Yours ever, R. L. STEVENSON. 1894 July

counted on his living; he took keen interest in my own poor work, and it was one of my ambitions to send him a book some day which would better deserve his attention."

XLII

Aug. 7th.

1894 Aug. MY DEAR COLVIN, — This is to inform you, sir, that on Sunday last (and this is Tuesday) I attained my ideal here, and we had a paper chase in Vailele Plantation, about 15 miles, I take it, from us; and it was all that could be wished. It is really better fun than following the hounds, since you have to be your own hound, and a precious bad hound I was, following every false scent on the whole course to the bitter end; but I came in 3rd at the last on my little Jack, who stuck to it gallantly, and awoke the praises of some discriminating persons. ($5 + 7 + 2\frac{1}{2} = 14\frac{1}{2}$ miles; yes, that is the count.) We had quite the old sensations of exhilaration, discovery, an appeal to a savage instinct; and I felt myself about 17 again, a pleasant experience. However, it was in the Sabbath

Day, and I am now a pariah among the English, as if I needed any increment of unpopularity. I must not go again; it gives so much unnecessary tribulation to poor people, and sure, we don't want to make tribulation. I have been forbidden to work, and have been instead doing my two or three hours in the plantation every morning. I only wish somebody would pay me £10 a day for taking care of cacao, and I could leave literature to others. Certainly, if I have plenty of exercise, and no work, I feel much better; but there is Biles the butcher! him we have always with us. 1894 Aug.

I do not much like novels, I begin to think, but I am enjoying exceedingly Orme's *History of Hindostan*, a lovely book in its way, in large quarto, with a quantity of maps, and written in a very lively and solid eighteenth century way, never pic turesque except by accident and from a kind of conviction, and a fine sense of order. No historian I have ever read is so

1894 Aug. minute; yet he never gives you a word about the people; his interest is entirely limited in the concatenation of events, into which he goes with a lucid, almost superhuman, and wholly ghostly gusto. "By the ghost of a mathematician" the book might be announced. A very brave, honest book.

Your letter to hand.

Fact is, I don't like the picter.[1] Oh, it 's a good picture, but if you *ask* me, you know, I believe, stoutly believe, that mankind, including you, are going mad, I am not in the midst with the other frenzy dancers, so I don't catch it wholly; and when you shew me a thing — and ask me, don't you know — Well, well! Glad to get so good an account of the *Amateur Emigrant.* Talking of which, I am strong for making a volume out of selections from the South Sea letters; I read over again the King of Apemama, and it is good in

[1] A proposed frontispiece for one of the volumes of the Edinburgh Edition.

spite of your teeth, and a real curiosity, a thing that can never be seen again, and the group is annexed and Tembinoka dead. I wonder could n't you send out to me, the *first* five Butaritari letters and the Low Archipelago ones (both of which I have lost or mislaid) and I can chop out a perfectly fair volume of what I wish to be preserved. It can keep for the last of the series. 1894 Aug.

Travels and Excursions, vol. II. Should it not include a paper on S. F. from the *Mag. of Art?* The A. E., the New Pacific capital, the Old ditto. *Silver. Squat.* This would give all my works on the States; and though it ain't very good, it 's not so very bad. *Travels and Excursions*, vol. III., to be these resuscitated letters — *Miscellanies*, vol. II. — *comme vous voudrez, cher monsieur!*

Monday, Aug. 13th.

I have a sudden call to go up the coast and must hurry up with my information. There has suddenly come to our naval com-

1894 Aug. manders the need of action, they 're away up the coast bombarding the Atua rebels. All morning on Saturday the sound of the bombardment of Lotuanu'u kept us uneasy. To-day again the big guns have been sounding further along the coast.

To-morrow morning early I am off up the coast myself. Therefore you must allow me to break off here without further ceremony. — Yours ever,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

XLIII

Vailima, 1894.

1894 Sept. MY DEAR COLVIN, — This must be a very measly letter. I have been trying hard to get along with *St. Ives*. I should now lay it aside for a year and I dare say I should make something of it after all. Instead of that, I have to kick against the pricks, and break myself, and spoil the book, if there were anything to spoil, which I am far from saying. I 'm as sick of the thing as ever any one can be; it 's a rudderless hulk; it 's a pagoda, and you can just feel — or I can feel — that it might have been a pleasant story, if it had been only blessed at baptism.

Our politics have gone on fairly well, but the result is still doubtful.

Sept. 10*th*.

I know I have something else to say to you, but unfortunately I awoke this morn-

1894 Sept. ing with collywobbles, and had to take a small dose of laudanum with the usual consequences of dry throat, intoxicated legs, partial madness and total imbecility; and for the life of me I cannot remember what it is. I have likewise mislaid your letter amongst the accumulations on my table, not that there was anything in it. Altogether I am in a poor state. I forgot to tell Baxter that the dummy had turned up and is a fine, personable-looking volume and very good reading. Please communicate this to him.

I have just remembered an incident that I really must not let pass. You have heard a great deal more than you wanted about our political prisoners. Well, one day, about a fortnight ago, the last of them was set free — Old Poè, whom I think I must have mentioned to you, the father-in-law of my cook, was one that I had had a great deal of trouble with. I had taken the doctor to see him, got him out on sick leave, and when he was put back again gave

bail for him. I must not forget that my wife ran away with him out of the prison on the doctor's orders and with the complicity of our friend the gaoler, who really and truly got the sack for the exploit. As soon as he was finally liberated, Poè called a meeting of his fellow-prisoners. All Sunday they were debating what they were to do, and on Monday morning I got an obscure hint from Talolo that I must expect visitors during the day who were coming to consult me. These consultations I am now very well used to, and seeing first, that I generally don't know what to advise, and second that they sometimes don't take my advice — though in some notable cases they have taken it, generally to my own wonder with pretty good results — I am not very fond of these calls. They minister to a sense of dignity, but not peace of mind, and consume interminable time always in the morning too, when I can't afford it. However, this was to be a new sort of consultation. Up came Poè and some eight

1894 Sept.

1894 Sept. other chiefs, squatted in a big circle around the old dining-room floor, now the smoking-room. And the family being represented by Lloyd, Graham, Belle, Austin and myself proceeded to exchange the necessary courtesies. Then their talking-man began. He said that they had been in prison, that I had always taken an interest in them, that they had now been set at liberty without condition, whereas some of the other chiefs who had been liberated before them were still under bond to work upon the roads, and that this had set them considering what they might do to testify their gratitude. They had therefore agreed to work upon my road as a free gift. They went on to explain that it was only to be on my road, on the branch that joins my house with the public way.

Now I was very much gratified at this compliment, although (to one used to natives) it seemed rather a hollow one. It meant only that I should have to lay out a good deal of money on tools and food and

to give wages under the guise of presents to some workmen who were most of them old and in ill-health. Conceive how much I was surprised and touched when I heard the whole scheme explained to me. They were to return to their provinces, and collect their families; some of the young men were to live in Apia with a boat, and ply up and down the coast to A'ana and A'tua (our own Tuamasaga being quite drained of resources) in order to supply the working squad with food. Tools they did ask for, but it was especially mentioned that I was to make no presents. In short, the whole of this little "presentation" to me had been planned with a good deal more consideration than goes usually with a native campaign. 1894 Sept.

(I sat on the opposite side of the circle to the talking-man. His face was quite calm and high-bred as he went through the usual Samoan expressions of politeness and compliment, but when he came on to the object of their visit, on their love and gratitude to Tusitala, how his name was

1894 Sept. always in their prayers, and his goodness to them when they had no other friend, was their most cherished memory, he warmed up to real, burning, genuine feeling. I had never seen the Samoan mask of reserve laid aside before, and it touched me more than anything else. A.M.)

This morning as ever was, bright and early up came the whole gang of them, a lot of sturdy, common-looking lads they seemed to be for the most part, and fell to on my new road. Old Poè was in the highest of good spirits, and looked better in health than he has done any time in two years, being positively rejuvenated by the success of his scheme. He jested as he served out the new tools, and I am sorry to say damned the Government up hill and down dale, probably with a view to show off his position as a friend of the family before his work-boys. Now, whether or not their impulse will last them through the road does not matter to me one hair. It is the fact that they have attempted it, that they have volunteered and are now really trying

to execute a thing that was never before heard of in Samoa. Think of it! It is road-making — the most fruitful cause (after taxes) of all rebellions in Samoa, a thing to which they could not be wiled with money nor driven by punishment. It does give me a sense of having done something in Samoa after all. 1894 Sept.

Now there 's one long story for you about "my blacks." — Yours ever,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

XLIV

Vailima, Samoa,
Oct. 6th, 1894.

1894 Oct. My dear Colvin, — We have had quite an interesting month and mostly in consideration of that road which I think I told you was about to be made. It was made without a hitch, though I confess I was considerably surprised. When they got through, I wrote a speech to them, sent it down to a Missionary to be translated, and invited the lot to a feast. I thought a good deal of this feast. The occasion was really interesting. I wanted to pitch it in hot. And I wished to have as many influential witnesses present as possible. Well, as it drew towards the day I had nothing but refusals. Everybody supposed it was to be a political occasion, that I had made a hive of rebels up here, and was going to push for new hostilities.

The Amanuensis has been ill, and after the above trial petered out. I must return to my own, lone Waverley. The captain refused, telling me why: and at last I had to beat up for people almost with prayers. However, I got a good lot as you will see by the accompanying newspaper report. The road contained this inscription, drawn up by the chiefs themselves: 1894 Oct.

"THE ROAD OF GRATITUDE."

"Considering the great love of Tusitala in his loving care of us in our distress in the prison, we have therefore prepared a splendid gift. It shall never be muddy, it shall endure for ever, this road that we have dug." This the newspaper reporter could not give, not knowing any Samoan. The same reason explains his references to Seumanutafa's speech, which was not long and *was* important, for it was a speech of courtesy and forgiveness to his former enemies. It was very much applauded. Secondly, it was not Po'e, it was Mataafā

1894 Oct. (don't confuse with Mataafa) who spoke for the prisoners. Otherwise it is extremely correct.

I beg your pardon for so much upon my aboriginals. Even you must sympathise with me in this unheard-of compliment, and my having been able to deliver so severe a sermon with acceptance. It remains a nice point of conscience what I should wish done in the matter. I think this meeting, its immediate results, and the terms of what I said to them, desirable to be known. It will do a little justice to me, who have not had too much justice done me. At the same time, to send this report to the papers is truly an act of self-advertisement, and I dislike the thought. Query, in a man who has been so much caluminated, is that not justifiable? I do not know; be my judge. Mankind is too complicated for me; even myself. Do I wish to advertise? I think I do, God help me! I have had hard times here, as every man must have who mixes up with public

business; and I bemoan myself, knowing that all I have done has been in the interest of peace and good government; and having once delivered my mind, I would like it, I think, to be made public. But the other part of me *regimbs*.[1] 1894 Oct.

I know I am at a climacteric for all men who live by their wits, so I do not despair. But the truth is I am pretty nearly useless at literature, and I will ask you to spare *St. Ives* when it goes to you; it is a sort of *Count Robert of Paris*. But I hope rather a *Dombey and Son*, to be succeeded by *Our Mutual Friend* and *Great Expectations* and *A Tale of Two Cities*. No toil has been spared over the ungrateful canvas; and it *will not* come together, and I must live, and my family. Were it not for my health,

[1] It seemed an obvious duty to publish the speech in question through the English press, as the best proof both of Stevenson's wise and understanding methods of dealing with his native friends, and of the affection and authority which he enjoyed among them. I have reprinted it, as a necessary supplement to this letter, in an appendix to the present volume.

1894 Oct. which made it impossible, I could not find it in my heart to forgive myself that I did not stick to an honest, commonplace trade when I was young, which might have now supported me during these ill years. But do not suppose me to be down in anything else; only, for the nonce, my skill deserts me, such as it is, or was. It was a very little dose of inspiration, and a pretty little trick of style, long lost, improved by the most heroic industry. So far, I have managed to please the journalists. But I am a fictitious article and have long known it. I am read by journalists, by my fellow-novelists, and by boys; with these, *incipit et explicit* my vogue. Good thing anyway! for it seems to have sold the Edition. And I look forward confidently to an after-math; I do not think my health can be so hugely improved, without some subsequent improvement in my brains. Though, of course, there is the possibility that literature is a morbid secretion, and abhors health! I do not think it is possible to

have fewer illusions than I. I sometimes wish I had more. They are amusing. But I cannot take myself seriously as an artist; the limitations are so obvious. I did take myself seriously as a workman of old, but my practice has fallen off. I am now an idler and cumberer of the ground; it may be excused to me perhaps by twenty years of industry and ill-health, which have taken the cream off the milk. 1894 Oct.

As I was writing this last sentence, I heard the strident rain drawing near across the forest, and by the time I was come to the word "cream" it burst upon my roof, and has since redoubled, and roared upon it. A very welcome change. All smells of the good wet earth, sweetly, with a kind of Highland touch; the crystal rods of the shower, as I look up, have drawn their criss-cross over everything; and a gentle and very welcome coolness comes up around me in little draughts, blessed draughts, not chilling, only equalising the

1894 Oct. temperature. Now the rain is off in this spot, but I hear it roaring still in the nigh neighbourhood — and that moment, I was driven from the verandah by random rain drops, spitting at me through the Japanese blinds. These are not tears with which the page is spotted! Now the windows stream, the roof reverberates. It is good; it answers something which is in my heart; I know not what; old memories of the wet moorland belike.

Well, it has blown by again, and I am in my place once more, with an accompaniment of perpetual dripping on the verandah — and very much inclined for a chat. The exact subject I do not know! It will be bitter at least, and that is strange, for my attitude is essentially *not* bitter, but I have come into these days when a man sees above all the seamy side, and I have dwelt some time in a small place where he has an opportunity of reading little motives that he would miss in the great world, and indeed, to-day, I am almost ready to call

the world an error. Because? Because I have not drugged myself with successful work, and there are all kinds of trifles buzzing in my ear, unfriendly trifles, from the least to the — well, to the pretty big. All these that touch me are Pretty Big; and yet none touch me in the least, if rightly looked at, except the one eternal burthen to go on making an income. If I could find a place where I could lie down and give up for (say) two years, and allow the sainted public to support me, if it were a lunatic asylum, would n't I go, just! But we can't have both extremes at once, worse luck! I should like to put my savings into a proprietarian investment, and retire in the meanwhile into a communistic retreat, which is double-dealing. But you men with salaries don't know how a family weighs on a fellow's mind. 1894 Oct.

I hear the article in next week's *Herald* is to be a great affair, and all the officials who came to me the other day are to be attacked! This is the unpleasant side of

1894 Oct. being (without a salary) in public life; I will leave anyone to judge if my speech was well intended, and calculated to do good. It was even daring — I assure you one of the chiefs looked like a fiend at my description of Samoan warfare. Your warning was not needed; we are all determined to *keep the peace* and to *hold our peace.* I know, my dear fellow, how remote all this sounds! Kindly pardon your friend. I have my life to live here; these interests are for me immediate; and if I do not write of them, I might as soon not write at all. There is the difficulty in a distant correspondence. It is perhaps easy for me to enter into and understand your interests; I own it is difficult for you; but you must just wade through them for friendship's sake, and try to find tolarable what is vital for your friend. I cannot forbear challenging you to it, as to intellectual lists. It is the proof of intelligence, the proof of not being a barbarian, to be able to enter into something out-

side of oneself, something that does not touch one's next neighbour in the city omnibus. 1894 Oct.

Good-bye, my lord. May your race continue and you flourish. — Yours ever,

TUSITALA.

EPILOGUE.

THE tenor of these last letters of Stevenson's to me, and of others written to several of his friends at the same time, seemed to give just cause for anxiety. Indeed, as the reader will have perceived, a gradual change had during the past months been coming over the tone of his correspondence. It was not like him to be sensitive to a rough word in a friendly review, nor to recur with so much feeling to my unlucky complaint, quickly regretted and withdrawn, as to his absorption in native affairs and local interests. To judge by these letters, his old invincible spirit of inward cheerfulness was beginning to give way to moods of depression and over-strained feeling; although to those about him, it seems, his charming habitual sweet-

ness and gaiety of temper were undiminished. Again, it was a new thing in his life that he should thus painfully feel the strain of literary work, at almost all other times his chief delight and pastime, and should express the longing to lay it down. His friend Mr. Charles Baxter and I at once telegraphed to him, as the success of the Edinburgh Edition enabled us to do, in terms intended to ease his mind and to induce him to take the rest of which he seemed so urgently in need. It seems doubtful if our words were fully understood: it is more doubtful still if that ever-shaping mind had retained any capacity for rest, except, as he had himself foretold, the rest of the grave. At any rate he took none, but on receipt of our message only turned to his old expedient, a change of labour. He gave up for a while the attempt to finish *St. Ives;* a task as to which I may say that he had no occasion to write so despondingly, for as a tale of adventure, manners, and the road, which

is all it was meant to be, it will be found a very spirited and entertaining piece, lacking, indeed, the dénouement, and containing a chapter or two which the author would doubtless have cancelled or recast, but others which are in almost his happiest manner of invention and narrative. He gave this up, and turned to a more arduous theme, the tragic story of the Scottish moorlands, in which the varieties and the strength of border character were to be illustrated in the Four Brothers of Cauldstaneslap, and the Hanging Judge was to be called upon like Brutus to condemn his son, and the two Kirsties, younger and elder, were to embody one the wavering and the other heroic soul of woman.

On this theme, which had already been working in his mind for some years, he felt his inspiration return, and laboured during the month of November and the first days of December at the full pitch of his powers and in the conscious happiness of their exercise. About the same time

various external circumstances occurred to give him pleasure. The incident of the road-making, as the reader has seen, had brought home to him as nothing else could have done the sense of the love and gratitude he had won from the island people and their chiefs, and of the power he was able to exercise on them for their good. Soon afterwards, the anniversaries of his own birthday and of the American thanksgiving feast brought evidences hardly less welcome, after so much contention and annoyance as the island affairs and politics had involved him in, of the honour and affection in which he was held by all that was best in the white community. By each succeeding mail came stronger proofs from home of the manner in which men of letters of the younger generation had come to regard him as their master, their literary conscience and example, and above all their friend. Deepest, perhaps, of all lay that pleasure of feeling himself to be working once more at his best. Of the many

and various gifts of this brilliant spirit — adventurer, observer, humourist, moralist, essayist, poet, critic, and romancer — of all his many and various gifts, the master gift was assuredly the creative, the gift of human and historical imagination. It was not in vain that his islanders called him Tusitala. Teller of tales he had been, first and foremost, from his childhood; seer into the hearts and fates of men and women he was growing to be more and more. The time was now ripe — had only the strength sufficed — for his career as a creative writer to enter upon a new and ampler phase. The fragment on which he wrought during the last month of his life gives to my mind (as it did to his own) for the first time the full measure of his powers; and if in the literature of romance there is to be found work more masterly, of more piercing human insight or more concentrated imaginative vision and beauty, I do not know it.

But to enter on such a task under such

conditions was of all his adventures the most adventurous. The Pacific climate had brought him, as we have seen, a renewal for some years of nervous energy and joy in living, but it may be doubted if that climate is ever truly and in the long run restorative to men of northern blood. At any rate it demands as a condition of health some measure of repose, and to repose he had, here as elsewhere, been a stranger. He entered upon his new labour, taxing alike to heart and mind, with all the fibres of his brain long strained by unremitting toil in the tropic heats he loved. Readers will remember the gallant doctrine of his early essay. "By all means begin your folio; even it the doctor does not give you a year, even if he hesitates about a month, make one brave push, and see what can be accomplished in a week. It is not only in finished undertakings that we ought to honour useful labour. A spirit goes out of the man who means execution, which outlives the most untimely end." In a temper

truly accordant with this doctrine he applied himself to his new task, and before it was fully half accomplished the doom so long foreshadowed and so little feared had overtaken him; he had died as he would have desired to die, and fallen smiling in the midst of the battle. That he was more or less distinctly aware of the imminence of the blow we may gather from the tenor of some of his letters written in these weeks. On the last day of his life, after a morning of happy work and pleasant correspondence, he was seen gazing long and wistfully at the mountain summit which he had chosen to be his burial-place. Towards the evening of the same day, he was talking gaily with his wife, and trying to reassure her under the sense of coming calamity which oppressed her, when the sudden rupture of a blood-vessel in the brain laid him, almost in a moment, unconscious at her feet; and before two hours were over he had passed away. To the English-speaking world he has left behind a treasure which it would

be vain as yet to attempt to estimate; to the profession of letters one of the most ennobling and inspiring of examples; and to his friends an image of the memory more vivid and more dear than are the presences of almost any of the living.

APPENDIX.

Address to the Chiefs on the opening of the Road of Gratitude, October, 1894.

Mr. Stevenson said: "We are met together to-day to celebrate an event and to do honour to certain chiefs, my friends, — Lelei, Mataafa, Salevao, Po'e, Teleso, Tupuola Lotofaga, Tupuola Amaile, Muliaiga, Ifopo, and Fatialofa. You are all aware in some degree of what has happened. You know these chiefs to have been prisoners; you perhaps know that during the term of their confinement, I had it in my power to do them certain favours. One thing some of you cannot know, that they were immediately repaid by answering attentions. They were liberated by the new administration; by the King, and the Chief Justice, and the Ta'its'ifono, who are here amongst us to-day, and to whom we all desire to tender our renewed and perpetual gratitude for that favour. As soon as they were free men — owing no man anything — instead of going home to their own places and families, they came to me; they offered to do this work for me as a free gift, without hire, without supplies, and I

was tempted at first to refuse their offer. I knew the country to be poor, I knew famine threatening; I knew their families long disorganised for want of supervision. Yet I accepted, because I thought the lesson of that road might be more useful to Samoa than a thousand breadfruit trees; and because to myself it was an exquisite pleasure to receive that which was so handsomely offered. It is now done; you have trod it to-day in coming hither. It has been made for me by chiefs; some of them old, some sick, all newly delivered from a harassing confinement, and in spite of weather unusually hot and insalubrious. I have seen these chiefs labour valiantly with their own hands upon the work, and I have set up over it, now that it is finished, the name of 'The Road of Gratitude' (the road of loving hearts) and the names of those that built it. 'In perpetuam memoriam,' we say and speak idly. At least so long as my own life shall be spared, it shall be here perpetuated; partly for my pleasure and in my gratitude; partly for others; to continually publish the lesson of this road."

Addressing himself to the chiefs, Mr. Stevenson then said: —

"I will tell you, Chiefs, that, when I saw you working on that road, my heart grew warm; not with gratitude only, but with hope. It seemed

to me that I read the promise of something good for Samoa; it seemed to me, as I looked at you, that you were a company of warriors in a battle, fighting for the defence of our common country against all aggression. For there is a time to fight, and a time to dig. You Samoans may fight, you may conquer twenty times, and thirty times, and all will be in vain. There is but one way to defend Samoa. Hear it before it is too late. It is to make roads, and gardens, and care for your trees, and sell their produce wisely, and, in one word, to occupy and use your country. If you do not others will."

The speaker then referred to the parable of the "Talents," Matt. xxv. 14-30, and continuing, impressively asked: "What are you doing with your talent, Samoa? Your three talents, Savaii, Upolu, and Tutuila? Have you buried it in a napkin? Not Upolu at least. You have rather given it out to be trodden under feet of swine: and the swine cut down food trees and burn houses, according to the nature of swine, or of that much worse animal, foolish man, acting according to his folly. 'Thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed.' But God has both sown and strawed for you here in Samoa; He has given you a rich soil, a splendid sun, copious rain; all

is ready to your hand, half done. And I repeat to you that thing which is sure: if you do not occupy and use your country, others will. It will not continue to be yours or your children's, if you occupy it for nothing. You and your children will in that case be cast out into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; for that is the law of God which passeth not away. I who speak to you have seen these things. I have seen them with my eyes — these judgments of God. I have seen them in Ireland, and I have seen them in the mountains of my own country — Scotland — and my heart was sad. These were a fine people in the past — brave, gay, faithful, and very much like Samoans, except in one particular, that they were much wiser and better at that business of fighting of which you think so much. But the time came to them as it now comes to you, and it did not find them ready. The messenger came into their villages and they did not know him; they were told, as you are told, to use and occupy their country, and they would not hear. And now you may go through great tracts of the land and scarce meet a man or a smoking house, and see nothing but sheep feeding. The other people that I tell you of have come upon them like a foe in the night, and these are the other people's

sheep who browse upon the foundation of their houses. To come nearer: and I have seen this judgment in Oahu also. I have ridden there the whole day along the coast of an island. Hour after hour went by and I saw the face of no living man except that of the guide who rode with me. All along that desolate coast, in one bay after another, we saw, still standing, the churches that have been built by the Hawaiians of old. There must have been many hundreds, many thousands, dwelling there in old times, and worshipping God in these now empty churches. For to-day they were empty: the doors were closed, the villages had disappeared, the people were dead and gone; only the church stood on like a tombstone over a grave, in the midst of the white men's sugar fields. The other people had come and used that country, and the Hawaiians who occupied it for nothing had been swept away, 'where is weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

"I do not speak of this lightly, because I love Samoa and her people. I love the land, I have chosen it to be my home while I live, and my grave after I am dead: and I love the people, and have chosen them to be my people to live and die with. And I see that the day is come now of the great battle; of the great and the last opportunity by which it shall be decided,

whether you are to pass away like these other races of which I have been speaking, or to stand fast and have your children living on and honouring your memory in the land you received of your fathers.

"The Land Commission and the Chief Justice will soon have ended their labours. Much of your land will be restored to you, to do what you can with. Now is the time the messenger is come into your villages to summon you; the man is come with the measuring rod: the fire is lighted in which you shall be tried; whether you are gold or dross. Now is the time for the true champions of Samoa to stand forth. And who is the true champion of Samoa? It is not the man who blackens his face, and cuts down trees, and kills pigs and wounded men. It is the man who makes roads, who plants food trees, who gathers harvests, and is a profitable servant before the Lord, using and improving that great talent that has been given him in trust. That is the brave soldier; that is the true champion; because all things in a country hang together like the links of the anchor cable, one by another: but the anchor itself is industry.

"There is a friend of most of us, who is far away; not to be forgotten where I am, where Tupuola is, where Po'e Lelei, Mataafa, Solevao,